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Crisis in Pakistan: Musharraf, the lawyers and the extremists

Harry der Nederlanden

President Musharraf

According too some accounts, the unrest in Pakistan is even more dangerous to the West than events in Iran because Pakistan is already a nuclear country. Others see the latest emergency measures and demonstrations as more of the same things that have been transpiring there for many years. So far the street demonstrations have been rather small, most of the protest having come from Pakistan's class of lawyers. If former Prime Minister Bhutto and other party leaders are able to rally people to join the lawyers in large scale demonstration, however, the situation in Pakistan could degenerate rapidly.

Most commentators dismiss President Musharraf's claim that the emergency measures were necessary to counter the threat of extremists and terrorists in the country. His actions were first of all aimed at the Supreme Court and the lawyers who belong to the moderate, more secular part of the population. However, the Court was withholding its decision on whether to recognize as legal the earlier election of Musharraf to the presidency. Initially it did approve the election, but then questioned its legality because Musharraf had not first laid aside his uniform as chief of the army. According to the country's constitution, the two offices cannot be held by one man.

Under the emergency order those judges who defied the government were dismissed and the rest were pressured to support the action. Many hundreds of lawyers and human rights activists were rounded up, some thrown into prison, others placed under house arrest only to be released a day or two later. The name of the game was intimidation.

While it is true that the terrorist threat seems to be a trumped up issue to subvert the revolt of the Court against his military rule, Musharraf may well believe that he is the only man capable of the asserting order and stability in the country. By suspending his authority in limbo, the Court, as he sees it, was endangering his ability to deal with the threat of Islamists in Pakistan. "Inaction at this moment is suicide for Pakistan," said Musharraf, "and I cannot allow this country to commit suicide." The tactic of delaying its decision did seem to be part of a strategy by the Court to keep Musharraf off balance.

Islamist gains

While many analysts have treated the terrorist threat as a red herring, there is little doubt that in the border regions of the country Islamists have been making surprising and sometimes shocking headway against the rule of the central government. In several districts the flag of Pakistan has been replaced by other banners. The border or tribal areas have always been quite independent, tolerating little interference from the center. Under pressure from the US, however, the military has moved into these areas in an attempt to uproot the Taliban and al-Qaeda type groups, with embarrassing results. The army doesn't seem to have the training or the stomach for such anti-insurgency missions and it suffered severe losses. The government made peace agreements in some of these areas, but this seems only to have encouraged the militants to greater activity.

More recently Islamist groups have attacked military outposts in several areas and taken control with very little resistance. In one instance, a superior government force surrendered to a much

See **Crisis** *on p. 2*

Middle East racing to nuclear power

Shiite Iran's ambitions have spurred 13 Sunni states to declare atomic energy aims this year.

Rice and Mubarak

Dan Murphy

Cairo – This week Egypt became the 13th Middle Eastern country in the past year to say it wants nuclear power, intensifying an atomic race spurred largely by Iran's nuclear agenda, which many in the region and the West claim is cover for a weapons program.

Experts say the nuclear ambi-tions of majority Sunni Muslim states such as Libya, Jordan, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia are reactions to Shiite Iran's high-profile nuclear bid, seen as linked with Tehran's campaign for greater influence and prestige throughout the Middle East.

"To have 13 states in the region say they're interested in nuclear power over the course of a year certainly catches the eye," says Mark Fitzpatrick, a former senior nonproliferation official in the US State Department who is now a fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. "The Iranian angle is the reason."

But economics are also behind this new push to explore nuclear power, at least for some of the aspirants. Egypt's oil reserves are dwindling, Jordan has no natural resources to speak of at all, and power from oil and gas has grown much more expensive for everyone. Though the day has not arrived, it's conceivable that nuclear power will be a cheaper option than traditional plants.

But analysts say the driver is Iran, which appears to be moving ahead with its nuclear program despite sanctions and threats of possible military action by the US. The Gulf Cooperation Council, a group of Saudi Arabia and the five Arab states that border the Persian Gulf, reversed a longstanding opposition to nuclear power last year.

Peaceful nuclear energy

As the closest US allies in the region and sitting on vast oil wealth, these states had said they saw no need for nuclear energy. But Fitzpatrick, as well as other analysts, say these countries now see their own declarations of nuclear intent as a way to contain Iran's influence. At least, experts say, it signals to the US how alarmed they are by a nuclear Iran.

"The rules have changed on the nuclear subject throughout the whole region," Jordan's King Abdullah, another US ally, told Israel's Haaretz newspaper early this year. "Where I think Jordan was saying, 'We'd like to have a nuclear-free zone in the area,' ...[now] everybody's going for nuclear programs."

The US has been vociferous in its opposition to Iran's nuclear bid, particularly since the country says it's determined to establish its own nuclear fuel cycle, which would dramatically increase its ability to build a nuclear bomb. But it has generally been tolerant of the nuclear ambitions of its friends in the region.

"Those states that want to pursue peaceful nuclear energy ... [are] not a problem for us," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said in response to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's announcement on Monday.

Henry Sokolski, executive director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center in Wash-ington and a former Defense Department

See **Nuclear power** *on p. 3*

News

Pakistan: war and unprecedented persecution in borderlands

Elizabeth Kendal

Persecution of Christians has long been intense right across Pakistan's highly Islamised and Talibanised North West Frontier Province (NWFP). However Islamic zeal, tension, intolerance and belligerence has escalated dramatically over recent years as the Pakistan Army has been engaged in an unpopular war against Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) bordering Afghanistan.

Peace, liberty and persecution

Heavy troop losses and plummeting troop morale has led President Musharraf to strike "peace deals" with Taliban and al-Qaeda affiliates in several regions of NWFP. South Waziristan was ceded to Taliban and al-Qaeda control in February 2005 and North Waziristan was ceded in September 2006. Since then the Taliban-al-Qaeda alliance has had sanctuary in the "Islamic Emirate of Waziristan" – an autonomous mini-state and terrorist sanctuary from where they have been able to freely consolidate, strategise, recruit, deploy, enforce their writ and expand their zone of influence.

This year the government signed similar "peace deals" (surrenders) in the NWFP tribal agencies of Bajaur and Mahmoud, as well as Swat district. As would be expected, in all areas under Taliban and al-Qaeda control a policy of zero tolerance towards everything "non-Islamic" is being violently imposed.

The "peace deals" have provided peace for the government, liberty for the Taliban and al-Qaeda and unprecedented persecution for Christians and all other non-Islamists.

Conflict resumes

On July 10 government troops stormed the radical Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad. In response, the Taliban-al-Qaeda alliance in Waziristan terminated its "peace agreement" with the government and resumed terrorist actions against the Pakistan Army. Further to this, the Taliban and al-Qaeda appear to be waging an insurgency that is aimed at expanding Taliban and al-Qaeda control throughout NWFP on their way to Islamabad.

The chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), Asma Jahangir, told DAWN "The NWFP presents a disturbing picture of religious militancy that is increasingly manifesting itself in vigilante actions against the population and creating widespread fear. The government has chosen to look the other way when the militants have blown up girls' schools and video shops, threatened teachers, students, doctors, nurses, NGO workers and barbers."

Swat district

The Swat district fell under Taliban control when the government struck a "peace deal" with the militants in May 2007. As noted by Hameedullah Khan in DAWN, "Violence intensified in the Swat valley after the signing of the agreement."

Basically, the "peace deal" enabled the terror to be re-directed. Militants who had been consumed with battling the Pakistan Army were freed-up to wage a violent campaign of forced Islamisation across the district: destroying evidence of Swat Valley's ancient Buddhist heritage and eliminating all practice they deem non-Islamic. Swat Valley is home to around 1,000 Christians, a tiny and vulnerable minority amongst 1.5 million Muslims.

Asma Jahangir (HRCP) told DAWN that in Swat Valley the education department has asked girls to comply with Taliban demands and wear burqas to school after threats from militants. Jahangir adds that the only Christian missionary school in the area had shut down after receiving threats. Jahangir also reports that security forces have been abandoning their posts after coming under consistent militant attack, leaving people at the mercy of the militants.

"Peace" ends

The "peace deal" signed in Swat in May was scrapped on September 21 when the "caliph" of the parallel religious government in NWFP, Taliban and al-Qaeda-linked cleric Maulana Fazlullah, announced he was terminating his agreement with the government. Fazlullah's army of some 4,500 militants immediately resumed violence and terrorism (including suicide bombings) against the Pakistan Army.

On October 24, the interim caretaker government of the NWFP deployed more than 2,000 paramilitary troops, police and helicopter gunships into Swat Valley "to provide security to the people" and "negotiate" with the militants.

On October 25 a powerful bomb blast destroyed an army vehicle traveling through Mingora, Swat's main town, killing around 30 people including 17 soldiers. The militants are not negotiating.

Fazlullah's madrassa-stronghold came under heavy attack on October 26. Fazlullah retaliated by kidnapping six security personnel (3 soldiers and 3 police) and seven civilians whom he accused of being government spies. While some remain missing, others were publicly executed and their decapitated heads were reportedly put on display in a local bazaar.

Islamisation, terror and war make for a tenuous future

In those areas of NWFP where the government has ceded control to the Taliban (South and North Waziristan, as well as Bajaur and Mahmoud agencies and Swat district) Christians are not only facing unprecedented persecution and forced Islamisation, they are now on the frontline of a battle for Pakistan – a life and death battle with high-stakes, being waged between the government and the Taliban-al-Qaeda alliance. This will push persecution amidst insecurity to unprecedented levels. Thousands are reportedly fleeing the area.

Religious liberty and the security of Pakistan's Christians hangs in the balance. Short and medium-term prospects are bleak. Please pray for the Christians of Pakistan.

Elizabeth Kendal rl_research@crossnet.org.au

Crisis ...*cont. from page 1*

smaller group of extremists. Many in the army do not see the pacification of the border areas as in Pakistan's interests but merely part of the agenda Musharraf is carrying out on behalf of the US. They have no wish to kill fellow Muslims to further the West's agenda in Afghanistan.

According to a poll by the Program on International Policy Attitudes, less than half of Pakistanis living in the big cities, where extremism is quite low, are in favor of sending the army to border areas to hunt down al-Qaeda and prevent Taliban fighters from crossing into Afghanistan.

Along the western border there are about 25 million Pashtun in Pakistan who share close religious and cultural ties with Afghan Pashtuns, who number about 12 milion (40 percent of Afghan's population). There, almost everyone is hostile to Western intervention in Afghanistan and openly support the Taliban.

In the once peaceful region of Swat, dubbed Pakistan's Switzerland for its skiing, militants seized at least three towns. Security forces surrendered without a fight to a motley force of militants rallied by a radical Mullah over the radio. He has been broadcasting for help from fellow radicals to join him in the establishment of Islamist rule in the region with great success.

So while it is true that in the main centers of the country extremists make up only a small fraction of the population and are no huge threat to the military government, Musharraf's image – and that of the army – has been damaged by these recent setbacks. Critics of the US alliance with Musharraf and the Pakistan army are quick to point out that despite many millions in military aid, the Pakistan army has done little to improve security along the long border with Afghanistan or to quash al-Qaeda.

Benazir Bhutto's role

Bhutto's role in the demonstrations has been somewhat hesitant. When the lawyers first launched their protests, she took a wait and see attitude and did not call her followers to join in the protests. She did condemn Musharraf's action and

Benazir Bhutto

has been demanding a fixed date for elections. When she did seek to rally her supporters for a large demonstration in Rawalpindi, she was placed under house arrest and police prevented any crowds from gathering in the city.

While government representatives have been unwilling to stipulate how long the state of emergency will continue, Musharraf has been assuring the West that elections will be held some time in February. Opposition parties, however, object that there can be no free and fair elections as long as the country is under what amounts to martial law, for it will be impossible for them to conduct political rallies.

There seems to be a general consensus among analysts that in declaring the state of emergency Musharraf has only increased the turmoil and instability in the country. He has made himself look weaker instead of stronger, and he has alienated precisely that part of the population that provides the civil institutions that provide a bulwark against Islamist extremism.

After months of negotiations that seemed to be slowly moving the country toward democracy, the dictatorial actions by Musharraf have once again highlighted the awkward position of the US.

While loudly touting its mission to bring democracy to the region, it has had to court the support of a military regime in the fight against the terrorists and militants. Ahmed Rashid, a Pakistani journalist, warned, " Afghanistan's stability and the fate of US and NATO soldiers depends on what happens in Pakistan. The spread of anti-Western feelings and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism have been fostered by a US policy that has sought to prop up Musharraf rather than forcing him to seek political consensus and empower a representative civilian government that would have public support for attacking the extremists."

While it is able to exert a certain amount of pressure on Musharraf by withholding military aid, the US, Musharraf knows very well, will not pull the rug out from under him. Despite the praise for democracy, no one is sure that elections will actually deliver a stable government in this volatile country. If the country were thrown into chaos, the extremists would certainly take advantage of the situation and Pakistan's nuclear arsenal might fall into their control. It's a nightmare evoked by many journalists, but at the moment there seems to be little real threat that the government will be toppled. The real power is still in the hands of the military, and if Musharraf comes to be seen as a liability, say the experts, the military will simply replace him with one of their own.

Redeemer ?

In the last issue, (p.19) I inadvertently expanded a headline that referred to Redeemer High School to refer instead to Redeemer University College. Redeemer University has so conditioned me to record its full designation that I added "University College" without thinking. My apologies to both schools.

Harry der Nederlanden

Nuclear power ... *continued from p.1*

official focused on containing the spread of nuclear weapons, says he finds that hands-off approach of the Bush administration alarming.

"I think we're trying to put out a fire of proliferation with a bucket of kerosene," he says. He said he recently spoke with a senior administration official on the matter, who argued that it was better for the US to cooperate with Egypt and other countries since, in the official's view, nuclear power in these countries is "inevitable" and it's better to be in a position to influence their choices and monitor the process.

Egypt's nuclear program

Egypt has had an on-again, off-again nuclear program since the 1950s. In the 1960s, Egypt threatened to develop a bomb largely out of anger over Israel's nuclear pursuit. Under Mr. Mubarak, who has ruled since 1981, the country has been consistent in saying it does not want nuclear weapons, and Egypt has been at the forefront of diplomatic efforts to declare the region a nuclear-weapons-free zone – a strategy it uses to target Israel's nuclear weapons.

Today, the country has a 22-megawatt research reactor north of Cairo that was built by an Argentine company and completed in 1997. A drive to develop a power plant in the 1980s stalled after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Russia.

In a nationally televised speech, Mubarak said nuclear power is an "integral part of Egypt's national security" while also promising that the country would not seek the bomb. Other Egyptian officials say the country is planning on having a working reactor within a decade, though analysts say that's an optimistic time line.

"They feel politically threatened by Iran's nuclear program, they've pointed out rightly that Israel [hasn't been] a member of [nonproliferation] treaties for many years," says Jon Wolfsthal, a nonproliferation expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "Of course there is economic logic: If they can sell whatever oil they have for $93 a barrel instead of using it, that's attractive ... but it shouldn't be assumed that it's all benign."

For Egypt, the allure of nuclear power is apparent. Its oil consumption is growing and electricity demand is growing at about 7 percent a year.

"Egypt can absolutely make a legitimate case for nuclear energy," says Mr. Fitzpatrick. "Its reserves are dwindling, it needs the oil and gas for export, and it needs to diversify its energy resources."

The nuclear fuel cycle

Even major oil producers such as Saudi Arabia are, along with Iran, arguing that they need nuclear power. They say it's better to sell their oil than to burn it at home.

But some analysts argue that nuclear power remains an economic loser. Mr. Sokolski says that when state subsidies to nuclear power are removed, nuclear plants are not economically viable. "If it was, private banks would be financing nuclear plants without loan guarantees. They can't do it and make money yet."

Of course whenever the topic of nuclear power comes up, particularly in the Middle East, concerns about the possible spread of nuclear weapons are not far behind. Experts who follow the nuclear weapons question say assurances of only pursuing peaceful objectives, as have been given by all the countries pursuing nuclear power, Iran included, shouldn't be taken at face value.

"Although Egypt does not feel directly threatened by Iran, it does feel its own power and influence in the region threatened by a resurgent nuclear armed Iran," says Fitzpatrick.

"There are a lot of countries in the region who have expressed interest in nuclear power, and I think there are good reasons to be concerned about this interest and the timing of this interest," says Mr. Wolfsthal. "Nuclear power has had economic arguments in its favor for a decade, but the fact is these programs are only coming to a head in light of the Iranian program."

Wolfsthal says the key issues in the coming years will be whether Egypt contracts a turn-key plant from a foreign company – which would minimize the amount of skill and technology transferred to Egyptian engineers – or if it will pursue nuclear partnerships that broaden its knowledge and skills bases.

Will they pursue their own nuclear fuel cycle, which, he says, would make little economic sense and would be a clear "red flag" of intent to develop a weapon, or will they buy nuclear fuel from abroad? "If you are interested in having the capability of building a nuclear weapon, the best way to start is by building up your nuclear power infrastructure," he says. "The same people that help you design and build nuclear reactors have many of the skill sets you will need if you are going to build a nuclear weapon."

Fitzpatrick agrees that if Egypt promises not to develop a nuclear fuel cycle and would agree to more intrusive inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency, there would be little reason for concern, though he doubts those commitments will be made. "Egypt won't take those steps because it says its hands can't be bound anymore while Israel's hands are unbound. They already resent the nuclear asymmetry with Israel, and a nuclear armed Iran on top of that adds too much for them."

Dan Murphy is a staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Ontario election: postmortem

Principalities & Powers
David T. Koyzis

Few recent elections have disappointed me more than the recent provincial election here in Ontario. Strongly supportive of neither Dalton McGuinty nor John Tory, I was disturbed by the way the faith-based schools issue was dealt with by both in the runup to the campaign and during the campaign itself.

To begin with, Tory mishandled the issue from the start. His proposal to fund faith-based schools within the larger public system unnecessarily antagonized people on both sides of the debate. He would have done better simply to revive and expand the tax credit that had been implemented by his Conservative predecessor, Ernie Eves, and later abolished by McGuinty's Liberal government in 2003. This could have been done without fanfare after his party had returned to power. If he had insisted on making it part of his campaign, he should have made more of the 1999 ruling of the United Nations Human Rights Committee that Ontario's funding of only one confessional school system while denying the same to all others is discriminatory.

Premier McGuinty argued that Tory's proposal would deepen sectarian divisions and divert resources from the public system, despite the fact that he himself had sent his own children to the separate Catholic schools. Others chimed in, claiming that to be progressive is to encourage greater social inclusion rather than fragmentation. Michael Fullan, retired professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, argued in favour of "integrated diversity," in which a single school system would facilitate mutual respect across religious and cultural lines. The most bizarre argument along these lines came from the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, which apparently believes that allowing parents to choose their own children's education is a violation of their civil liberties.

The education issue, perhaps more than any other, is what returned McGuinty's party to power. This is discouraging for those believing in the priority of parental responsibility in educating children. Efforts to achieve educational justice have suffered a significant reversal. It is unlikely that candidates for provincial public office will risk their political fortunes by raising the issue again in the foreseeable future.

Then there was the referendum on electoral reform. With no major party in favour of the mixed-member-proportional (MMP) system and with Elections Ontario seemingly sitting on the issue until the last moment, most voters lacked enough information to judge the merits of MMP and the current first-past-the-post (FPTP) system. So they opted for the status quo. In 1993 New Zealanders voted for MMP out of protest against the economic policies of both National and Labour Parties. Unfortunately, in Ontario there was no issue of comparable magnitude to drive voters to seek alternatives to the two major parties and FPTP.

Nevertheless, some 37 percent of Ontarians voted for MMP, which is not an insignificant number. As Andrew Coyne has pointed out, this is only a few percentage points less than the 42 percent garnered by McGuinty's Liberals: "If not quite a ringing endorsement of MMP, it suggests a significant level of dissatisfaction with the status quo – a conclusion amplified by the abysmal turnout, a historic low of 52 percent." As with the education issue, the larger effort towards electoral reform appears to have been set back. At the same time, it is clear that, with voter abstention rates at close to half the electorate, something is amiss. Though electoral reform has been defeated in three provinces, the issues that have prompted calls for reform will not go away. We may have to wait for a New Zealand-like crisis to overtake us before there will be a groundswell of support.

In the meantime, we do well to recall that, when our own fallible efforts run aground, we can rely on God's sure promise that his kingdom will come according to his own timing and not ours. To be sure, our governments do not yet recognize the prior authority of parents in education. Yet we are by no means *compelled* to send our children to the public schools. And our electoral system may be stacked against minority voices, including those of Christians. Nevertheless, we enjoy considerable liberty to air our convictions in public – something that ought not be taken for granted, considering that in many parts of the globe Christians endure outright persecution.

As we regroup for the battles ahead, let us do so, not with complaints on our lips, but with gratitude in our hearts for what God in his grace has given us and with hope for the future.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and is the author of the award-winning Political Visions and Illusions *(Inter-Varsity Press). His blog can be found at:* <http://byzantinecalvinist.blogspot.com/>.

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Editorial

Doing evangelism and manufacturing Christian believers

Harry der Nederlanden

Sociologists have given a label to yet another generation: after the so-called X-generation comes the Millennial Generation. Employers are worried and frustrated. Many of this generation have never held part-time jobs or developed much of a work discipline. Not the job or the company but their own wants and needs have priority. They don't seem to take starting times and schedules very seriously, at least not as seriously as their own. And if the boss gets too demanding and obnoxious, they're liable to tell him off and go looking for greener pastures. They refuse to be turned into corporation types and opt to come to work in blue jeans and flip-flops rather than in a suit and tie or "proper' office dress. In an attempt to integrate the Millennial Generation into the culture of the workplace some companies are hiring consultants either to coach them or to deal with frictions.

I'm sure we'll be hearing more about this Millennial Generation. It's a catchy title that attracts popular sociologists and journalists. Some parts of the description given by "60 Minutes" actually remind me of some of the twitches of my own generation in the middle to late 60s. When I began working in the engineering department of Alberta Government Telephones, we newcomers refused to wear the expected corporate dress – sports coat, tie and dress slacks. We preferred a much more casual style. It wasn't just the upper level managers that pressured us to conform to the white collar culture. So did the older engineers. "If you dress like a blue collar worker, "they'd say, "pretty soon you'll get paid like one."

Although we didn't know it at the time, we belonged to the "60s Generation," a title conceived in the 70s. And some rather unflattering things have been written about us too, even though I'd guess that most of us had held part-time jobs. We seemed determined to overthrow all the certitudes and discipline of the post-war generation.

Such labels do have some content, I suppose, although it is hard to take them very seriously. How on earth can you say anything truly meaningful about an entire generation? The piece that I saw on "60 minutes" focused almost entirely on well-educated upper middle class white kids with pretty good prospects in the work force. Given our multi-ethnic society, kids who grow up in inner cities and kids of immigrants, the generalizations struck me not just as overly broad but even as a tad racist – as if the others can safely be ignored by the corporate world in defining this generation.

But in this era of the social sciences, not just governments and corporations are interested in getting an overview of the make-up of the population, so are churches. The government has to have some idea, to use another example, of the kind of strain the ageing "Baby Boomers" will put on the healthcare system and on Canada Pension. And businesses are rightfully concerned about what kind of work force they will have to draw on to replace all those experienced Baby Boomers. Any institution that fails to undertake such studies and planning will be considered negligent in this day and age. We can no longer rely on old tried and true methods or on guesswork. To get results, we have to know the lay of the land and plan accordingly.

I suppose this aspect of our modern society owes its rise not just to the emergence of the social sciences but also to our acute awareness of the role the market plays in every aspect of our lives, especially after the growth of the media. It was only a matter of time before church leaders concluded that to address their contemporaries effectively the church too needed to discover what attitudes, needs, anxieties, ideas and lifestyle habits drove them. Suddenly, the church discovered that much of the surrounding population had become strange, alien, that they no longer used the same language and no longer thought of the world in the same way as dozens of previous generations.

In the middle of the 20th century, the World Council of Churches talked about "the Fourth Man," that is, a new sort of human being for whom God had vanished from the heavens. With the rise of urbanization, secularization, technology and existentialism, theologians argued, the church was confronted by a decidedly new type of individual to whom the language of Christianity and the Bible had little or no meaning. Church leaders struggled with ways to articulate the faith in new ways that would speak to secular man. The World Council discussions were conducted on a rather high theoretical level and mostly in mainline churches.

But the idea that the church had to be much more attuned to the realities and mentalities of the current generation of unchurched people was soon picked up by evangelical churches. They were driven by the desire to make their evangelistic outreach more relevant and effective, and they did everything in their power to make their churches "seeker sensitive". Larger churches like Willow Creek hired consultants and marketing experts to help them minister to a population with a very different mindset and lifestyle than those who had responded to revivals in the past.

Almost every denomination, including the CRC, has availed itself of such studies on both the denominational and local level. We have had to jettison the idea that human beings are more or less the same with only minor variations between generations. Nowadays, if anything, we tend to exaggerate the extent to which changes in society, especially in terms of technology, the media and the internet, have changed our very nature – not just how we live but how we experience reality. But it is true that in a relatively short time we in the West have seen transformations in attitude and thought (toward sexuality, for instance) which had remained relatively constant for hundreds of prior generations.

Recently Willow Creek, the flagship of the seeker sensitive movement, did a careful review of the effectiveness of their programs. The results, according to their own staff, were disappointing. They lamented that despite all their careful planning and programs, they were not producing solid, mature disciples of Jesus Christ.

"We made a mistake," said Bill Hybels, Willow Creek's senior pastor. "What we should have done when people crossed the line of faith and become Christians, we should have started telling people and teaching people that they have to take responsibility to become 'self feeders.' We should have gotten people, taught people, how to read their Bible between services, how to do the spiritual practices much more aggressively on their own."

The church's leaders have resolved to think their methods through from the ground up and start with a "clean sheet of paper". That sounds as if the experts are once again going to do their polls and surveys, create new categories and grids, and think up new methods and approaches that will more effectively disciple new and old believers.

However, we can classify people – their motives, their character, their lifestyles, their various social situations, the influences upon them from family, society and history – along innumerable grids. The variety of human beings is almost inexhaustible as are the ways we may look at ourselves.

So when the pollsters and social scientists draw up their categories and grids to tell us what we and the people we are trying to reach are like, they always miss much more than they can possibly record. And then they still have to make sense of what they've learned. The result is that we always deal in oversimplifications when we characterize large groups of people. This doesn't mean, of course, that we learn nothing at all from such studies. But it does mean that the perspective and framework behind our questions and by which we organize the data become extremely important. But even if we approach all of this with a sound philosophical and theological framework, what we illuminate and get to understand is still only a small fraction of this created reality.

We live and move and have our being amidst huge mysteries – mysteries further obscured and complicated by the brokenness and darkness of sin. We simply cannot line up all the ducks in a row. We cannot make it all add up perfectly like a geometry problem. We will never discover a one-size-fits-all method for evangelizing and turning out mature saints.

The miracle that God works in making us new creatures in his image is that in his patience and longsuffering he gathers such a wide variety of saints that no one template covers them all. In our eagerness to do more perfectly what God does imperfectly, we devise methods and techniques that invariably fail to produce what we expect. In the process, we tend to heap upon pastors and upon ourselves expectations that are semi-divine. And we tend to miss signs of sainthood that don't fit with our super-charged ideal of what constitutes a mature Christian.

This doesn't mean churches should do away with all surveys and long-term plans, of course. But we should perhaps be a little more humble and patient in what we may expect from our efforts. Otherwise, in looking for the results of our own almighty works, we miss what God has meanwhile wrought in the hearts of ordinary believers serving God in ordinary ways.

Willow Creek's mistake may be not so much in what it has achieved (and it has achieved a lot) than in the presumption that it can begin with a clean sheet and design a way to mold Christians from the ground up.

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Opinion

The truth about Islamo-Fascism hurts

The thugs and hooligans who disrupted Horowitz's speech do not belong on a university campus. (Professor Harvey Klehr, to the editor of *Emory Wheel*, Emory University)

My most difficult task in writing this book was living daily with the knowledge it provides of the enormous damage that several generations of tenured radicals have inflicted on our educational system; and of being cognizant of the unrelenting malice that so many of them hold in their hearts for a country that has given them the great privileges and freedoms they enjoy as a birthright. (David Horowitz, *The Professors*, p. xlviii)

Harry Antonides

David Horowitz switched sides several decades ago by breaking with his erstwhile Marxist comrades to become an eloquent defender of freedom. He now heads the David Horowitz Freedom Center, where he has made no friends among the Left especially those in the academic world.

He has been active via an organized campaign to expose the hypocrisy of universities who boast of their central role in advancing the free flow of ideas and opinions, whereas many of them have become breeding grounds of intolerance and political correctness.

(The story of that campaign is told in Horowitz's *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*, cited above.)

Tackling the lion's den

Obviously, Horowitz is no stranger to controversy, frequently in the form of vitriolic attacks. His latest campaign to tell the truth in the halls of the American academy took place during the week of October 22-26 at a series of meetings at more than 100 American universities and colleges. The theme of these events was "Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week." The sponsor was Horowitz's Freedom Center assisted by the Young America's Foundation and the Leadership Institute.

The purpose of the speeches was to urge the Muslim Students Association and others to break with all Muslim organizations, notably the Muslim Brotherhood, which seek to establish a global Muslim empire, to protest the violent oppression of women in Islam, to strengthen those on campus who reject the prevailing anti-American curriculum, while calling for an alternative one.

Some of the most public (and controversial) figures, besides Horowitz himself, spoke at these public meetings, including Robert Spencer, Nonie Darwish, Wafa Sultan, Dennis Prager, Steve Emerson, Cliff May, Phyllis Chesler, Ibn Warraq, Michael Medved and Daniel Pipes. A brief film shown at these events made shockingly real the execution style shooting of a burka-clad woman who had run afoul of the Taliban moral purity enforcers.

Well before the actual meetings took place, an array of campus leftist and pro-Islamist organization unleashed an invective-loaded attack on the Horowitz-led campaign.

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) sent letters to all presidents of colleges hosting these events urging them to rescind their permission to hold these meetings at their facilities.

These groups organized a counter-protest at the Washington Monument, which they called "American Fascism Awareness Day." Sponsors included the ADC as well as the Revolutionary Communist Party. The latter's spokesperson announced: "This is an answer to the Jew Horowitz and the neo-conservative Zionists who dragged us into an imperialist war and are spreading hatred against Muslims to support their war plans against the Republic of Iran."

At many of the meetings the protesters tried to create havoc that sometimes made it difficult for the speakers to complete their talks. They were interrupted and shouted at, called racists, bigots and Islamophobes. But at all of the planned meetings, except one, eventually the speakers were able to deliver their message, though in some cases the protesters had to be removed by police.

Attacking dissent and critical thinking

On Monday, October 22, Horowitz was able to complete his speech at the University of Wisconsin. Although Kevin Barrett, conspiracy theorist (the U.S. government staged 9/11) grabbed a floor mike and shouted that 9/11 still needs to be investigated. The audience, including many critics, began a rather rude Wisconsin football chant, the sheer volume of which "blew Kevin Barrett out of the room." Horowitz continued:

I want to thank everyone here, including my detractors for restoring order. This just shows how easy it is to destroy – even if it was only momentarily – the fabric of a conversation. I will open these mikes for questions afterward, hopefully not rants, but actual questions. I find when I am in conversation with someone I strongly disagree with and I have plenty of friends who are on the other side, for example, of the Iraq war issue, I always learn – even if I am not persuaded by their arguments – that there are people on the other side of these debates who are very passionate and very emotional, who are sincere in their beliefs and who are committed to their country and its democracy. I hope that some of my opponents here, if we can manage to keep this at a civilized level, who will also come away with that kind of impression and who will think about these issues in a new way. That's the whole idea of having this conversation.

But things did not go as well two days later when Horowitz tried to present the same message at Emory University. The lecture hall was packed with a cross section of students, professors and other members of the community. But they also included such organizations as Amnesty International and the Muslim Students Association, as well as the National Project to Defend Dissent & Critical Thinking in Academia.

Protesters waved signs and yelled insults and questions at Horowitz, accusing him of being a racist and bigot, a supporter of Hitler, and in favour of torturing and murdering people. When a University official warned the protesters that they risked being forcibly removed, they shouted "Everyone stand up, they can't take us all," and "Stand up in solidarity." The disruption intensified and became so chaotic that even the police were unable to subdue the crowd. The meeting came to an abrupt end, and Horowitz was led off stage.

She won't be silenced

Nonie Darwish, author of Now They Call me Infidel *and founder of Arabs for Israel spoke at the UC Berkeley campus on October 23. Afterwards she said that the animosity she encountered made her feel that without the extensive security protecting, she would have been physically hurt. The first statement to her from the Al-Jazeera representative was: "You are the most hated woman in the Arab world." She responded: "Arab media spread a hate campaign after my book came out.... I believe Arab media is trying to misrepresent my views in order to silence me."*

She was met with shouts of racist and fascist. At one time the noise was so loud that she could not continue. Though the protesters were obviously trying to intimidate her into giving up, she eventually managed to complete her speech. She gave a riveting account of growing up in Egypt where she experienced first hand the suppression of women, and then her excitement and gratitude at finding freedom and openness in the U.S.

Her great disappointment came when she found that many American Muslims are hard at work to spread their concept of radical Islam in the U.S, while they cleverly exploit the generosity and naiveté of the American public and many officials.

She said that the deception is phenomenal, enabling Islamists to push Wahabi Saudi values in America; values that she had never even seen in Egypt. But then she told the audience: "I have not come to America to become a Wahabi Saudi." In closing she threw out this challenge to her critics:

If Islam is a religion of peace then we must demand better from our religious leaders. We've had it with the self-anointed intolerant Ayatollahs, Mullahs and Sheikhs who act like Allah and silence speech by issuing Fatwas of death. I ask the support of the American Left. You should be our natural allies because we are the reformers and defenders of freedoms in the Middle East.

In looking back at the rude and vicious treatment she received, she said:

The sad thing about this whole event was the feeling that radical Muslims and their far Left supporters would rather never criticize Islamic culture than stand up against the culture that flogs, stones, beheads and amputates limbs. Not offending a religion has become more important to the far Left (unless it is Christianity or Judaism) than human rights of Muslims and victims of terror....

American universities are becoming tyrannical when it comes to Conservative values and to Arab Americans who dare to speak out against the culture of jihad. It does not matter how people in my early life in Egypt suffered from honor killing, female genital mutilation and oppression of women.

Donna M. Hughes, Professor at the University of Rhode Island's Women's Studies Program, spoke on "Women's Rights and Political Islam." She left no doubt about her stand against what she called "a major threat to world peace and freedom," carefully unpacking certain key terms used in this debate: Islamic fundamentalism, Islamic extremism, Islamo-Fascism, Islamism, and Radical Islam. And she urged her audience to appreciate the freedoms they enjoy to learn more about women who live under sharia law, and then to help these women in their struggles.

Hughes added an interesting dimension by telling of her experience while teaching in England in the mid-1990s. (See box, p.9)

The message got through

In reviewing what happened during this Islamo-Fascism Awareness week's activities, Horowitz pointed out that the message had reached many in addition to those who attended the meetings. More had been reached via the Internet; at the end of the week there had been 644,000 website references to this campaign. There were also many reports in the print as well as the broadcast media.

Horowitz paid tribute to the speakers who showed courage in the face of the slander and attacks they knew would result from exposing radical Islam, now in alliance with American leftists "who regard it as their political task to run interference for America's enemies."

But he was especially proud of the students who braved the fiercest attacks from within their

Continued on p.9

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Christian human rights lawyer reports Persecution in China

Jeremy Reynalds

HONG KONG (ANS) – As the 2008 Beijing Olympics approaches, Chinese Christians are facing increased levels of persecution as authorities seek to keep dissidents away from international media, according to a Christian attorney in Beijing.

The *Baptist Standard* reported that Christian human rights lawyer Li Heping says he was kidnaped and tortured for nearly six hours on Sept. 29, and two other Beijing Christian activists have been held under house arrest since Oct. 1.

Li, who has defended a number of cases involving Christians arrested for underground house-church activities, is a partner in the Beijing Global Law Firm. He also serves as an editorial board member of the journal *Chinese Law & Religion Monitor.*

The *Baptist Standard* reported that Li described his ordeal in a statement to the international community titled "May the Light of Rule of Law Shine on China – Personal Statement from Attorney Li Heping on Being Beaten." Li reported being kidnapped, interrogated and tortured by four men who claimed to be members of the Beijing State Security Bureau.

According to the *Baptist Standard,* after severely beating him and shocking him with electric batons for several hours, Li said the men warned him to leave the city with his family. He said the men then put a black head cover on him and released him in a wooded area in Xiaotangshan in Beijing's Changping District.

Meanwhile, Beijing house church activists Liu Fenggang and Pastor Hua Huiqi remained under house arrest, despite being released in July and Feb. after serving three year and six month prison terms respectively.

The *Baptist Standard* reported that Hua was told his 77-year-old mother has been serving a two-year sentence as a result of his activism. He has learned his mother recently was beaten severely, denied medical care and imprisoned.

On Oct. 4, Hua issued a letter titled "Pray for the Chinese Police" calling on the international community to pray for the Chinese leadership and police to "soften their hearts and release my ailing mom so that the gospel can spread in China freely."

According to Amnesty International, abuses against human rights activists – including religious dissidents – have escalated in the run-up to the 17th Communist Party Congress and the Beijing 2008 Olympics.

They claim Li is one of several human rights lawyers and legal advisers who have been subjected to arbitrary detention and torture or mistreatment. Some have been imprisoned. Others have been placed under tight police surveillance in their own homes. The *Baptist Standard* reported that Amnesty International says activities such as these contradict official promises to improve human rights before the Olympics.

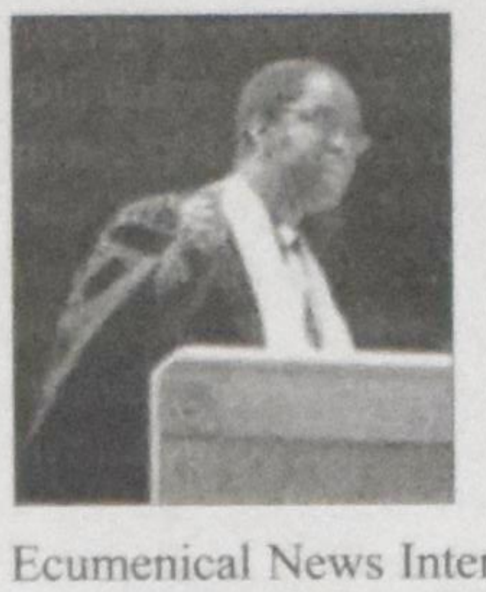
Bob Fu, president of the China Aid Association, based in Midland, has asked fellow Christians to pray for Chinese Christians who are persecuted for their faith and to advocate on their behalf through letter-writing. "The brutal act of state terrorism against attorney Li and the two pastors sent a chilling signal to all the peaceful rights defenders in China," the *Baptist Standard* reported he said.

Jeremy Reynalds is a freelance writer and the founder and director of Joy Junction, New Mexico's largest emergency homeless shelter.

Leaders of Christianity's diverse traditions meet in Africa

Fredrick Nzwili

Nairobi (ENI) – A global gathering aimed at bringing together representatives of all the world's main Christian traditions has opened in Kenya with leaders saying they want to find new ways of working together.



"I don't think it is going to be easy, but I hope we will find a meeting space," the Rev. Setri Nyomi, general secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches told Ecumenical News International on the opening day of the November meeting, called the Global Christian Forum, at Limuru, near Nairobi.

The forum was originally proposed in the mid-1990s by the Rev. Konrad Raiser, a German theologian who was then general secretary of the Geneva-based World Council of Churches.

He said it could reach out to Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and Evangelical churches that do not belong to the WCC, whose 347 member churches are drawn predominantly from Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox traditions. "Our differences are not bigger than what binds us together," said Nyomi. "We have more in common, but how we express it is different."

The WCC described the Kenya gathering as bringing together "the broadest range of Christian traditions ever represented at a global meeting".

About half of the 250 participants come from Evangelical and Pentecostal churches, which are growing rapidly in many regions of the world, particularly in the Southern hemisphere.

"It is a wonderful opportunity for the broad spectrum of Christian churches and communities to encounter one another and to be in conversation with one another, not with the view of creating complicated structures, but rather with the view of maintaining the fellowship of conversation and of Christian hope," the Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky of the Orthodox Church in America, told ENI.

The WCC said the meeting is intended to allow representatives of all the main Christian traditions and of their global organizations to explore and address together common challenges.

Addressing the forum's opening session, the Rev. Peter Karanja, an Anglican priest and general secretary of the National Council of Churches of Kenya, said churches are increasingly reluctant to make moral, ethical or spiritual demands on their members for fear of being labelled legalistic, fundamentalist or fanatical.

"The individuals are left to choose what being a Christian means for them and as long as they are happy, then everything goes," said Karanja. "There is something inauthentic about our faith, if it just remains in our heads or liturgy, but does not translate into changed lives and conduct."

The Global Christian Forum states on its Web site that its intention is to bring together Christians and churches from very different traditions who have little or no contact with each other. "It is about building bridges where there are none, overcoming prejudices, creating and nurturing new relationships," it says.

Regional meeting have been held under the auspices of the forum in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America.

"I expect we shall come into an agreement regarding the future of the Global Christian Forum, and I hope we agree to have a very small staff to keep the contacts going," said the Rev. Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation.

He said, "These things [issues] should be delegated to the regions and national levels in the spirit of the global forum."

:: The Christian traditions represented at the Global Christian Forum are: African Instituted, Anglican, Baptist, Evangelical, Disciples (Churches of Christ), Friends, Holiness, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Moravian, Old Catholic, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Pentecostal, Reformed, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Seventh-day Adventist, United and Uniting Churches.

Anglican leaders praise religion decision by Chinese communists

Francis Wong

Hong Kong (ENI) – A group of Asian and African Anglican leaders recently returned from a visit to China have praised a decision by the country's ruling Communist Party to include the word "religion" in its constitution.

"This is a recognition of the increasing role that the Church plays in the nation's economic and social development," the Anglican leaders said in a statement issued after their visit. They met church leaders and government officials, and visited theological institutions and sites of relics of early Christian missions.

The church leaders described the decision by the Communist Party during its October15-21 national party congress to mention the word "religion" in its constitution as "a very significant amendment". It demonstrated that the Chinese government wished to support the work of the Church, they said.

State media said the change had been made to meet the demands posed by the "new situation and new tasks".

The Communist Party for a long time discouraged religion, because it was officially atheist.

In recent years, however, Chinese leaders have said that religion can play an important role in creating a "harmonious society". The term is used by the Chinese leaders to refer to the need for economic growth to be accompanied by social cohesion.

"This process of opening up to the world, healthily reforming its institutions and re-affirming religious freedom, with the rules and regulations established, would certainly build up a harmonious, prosperous and stable society," the Anglican leaders stated after their visit to Beijing, Xi'an, Nanjing and Shanghai.

Chinese government statistics in April 2005 said there were "more than 100 million religious adherents" among China's 1.3 billion people, representing a variety of beliefs and practices.

Protestant and Anglican churches in China are united and jointly run by a group called the Three-Self Movement and the China Christian Council. They describe themselves as "post-denominational". The Roman Catholic Church and unregistered or "house" churches also have large followings outside the official church in China.

The Anglican delegation came from the Global South Anglican group, and included its president, Archbishop Peter J. Akinola from Nigeria, and its general secretary Archbishop John Chew from Singapore, as well as Anglican leaders from Central Africa, Congo, Jerusalem and the Middle East, Korea, Rwanda and Uganda.

The Anglican leaders said in their October 31 statement the visit enabled them "to experience the level of cooperation that prevails between the State and the China Christian Council and the National Committee of the Three Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China".

Revival shakes up Toraja Church

Richard van Houten

Indonesia – In January, a young girl in Central Sulawesi, in the town of Meko, prayed for her mother's healing when the mother was about to go to a traditional healer for help. The mother recovered, and in the same week, one of the girl's Muslim classmates also found healing when the girl prayed for her. Over the next several months, the girl, whose name is Selvi, was instrumental in the healing of many others who came to their door. When the crowds became too much for her, the mother also prayed for the gift of healing and received it.

By Ascension Day, thousands of people, both Muslims and Christians, visited the small village, living in huts set up by local people. Worship and singing took place the whole day. The mother repeatedly preached to the crowds, declaring, "Do not come only to seek the miracle of healing, but be ready to be renewed by God."

The location was not far from Toraja, where a large Reformed church serves the Torajan people. Many members and leaders from the Toraja Church traveled to Meko, and when they returned, they wanted to share the Meko experience. When they asked Meko travelers to assemble at the church headquarters on June 1, the crowds of more than ten thousand people flowed over all of the church offices, the nearby church, and the square in between them. Church offices were designated for those who were ill, and those present gathered in small groups around them to pray for healing, and many were healed. The worship service had been scheduled for 6 p.m. but the people gathered in the morning and were singing the whole day.

The Toraja Church had scheduled a pastors' conference for June 24-30, but the Meko phenomenon overwhelmed the program. The days were filled with revival-style meetings. Seminars on violence, community development and other topics were organized, and thousands of people came from all over Toraja and beyond. Eri Hutabarat, one of the church staff executives and the director of the Institute for Theology, estimated the crowds to be more than 100,000 people.

The Toraja Church had to coach its pastors how to receive this phenomenon. The churches are filled, extra services have been added. Pastors have to counsel both those who were healed and those who were not to help them understand what happened. Worship and liturgies are being adapted to accommodate the desires of the members. Hutabarat, while at the WARC executive committee meeting in Trinidad in October, said the revival was transforming her church. The church was also preparing a book to help members understand the Meko phenomenon and the miracles that were happening in their midst.

Reprinted from the Reformed Ecumenical Council website, which includes a rich variety of Reformed resources. See http://rec.gospelcom.net/index.php?section=1. Richard Van Houten is the REC General Secretary.

Christians seek new life in Europe

MOSUL (IRIN) – Members of the Iraqi Christian community in the northern cities of Mosul and Kirkuk have asked European countries to expedite their visa applications and grant them asylum, according to Christian leaders there.

"Most of the Christians in Iraq have moved to northern provinces as they flee violence against their religious group. Most of them were taking refuge in Mosul and Kirkuk but in the past two months, at least 27 Christians were killed in Mosul and Kirkuk as they were leaving their churches or community prayers in private residences," said cleric and spokesman for the Christian Peace Association (CPA), Lucas Barini.

"Panic has spread, especially since women and children were among the victims," Barini added. "In the past two weeks, at least 120 families have received threatening letters at their homes giving them a month to leave Mosul and Kirkuk but they don't have anywhere else to go."

According to Barini, the CPA and four local NGOs – Iraq Aid Association, White Birds Clerics Organisation, Catholic Organisation of Virgin Mary and Christian Refugee Council – have sent requests to European countries and international NGOs to help the Christian community, whose security, they say, has deteriorated. At the same time, many families lack the funds to leave Iraq.

"We prefer not to name the organisations and governments we have asked for help but we would like them to come up with a fast and serious solution to our problem as people are dying solely because of their faith," Barini said.

Father Danilo Anuar, a spokesman for the Catholic Organisation of Virgin Mary, told IRIN: "We are trying to maintain our faith and religious work but on October 23, a couple was killed for receiving people at their home in Mosul for prayers and since then we have asked families to pray only in their own homes and to keep their children indoors for as long as they can."

450,000 Christians in Iraq

According to the CPA, about 450,000 Christians remain in Iraq out of 800,000 estimated before the US-led invasion (2003).

"Nearly half have left the country and the other half are still here because they cannot flee or they have been denied [entry] visas to other countries. They aren't patriotic to the point of losing their lives by staying in Iraq and urge European countries to allow them to live in their lands," Anuar said.

The remaining Christian families, scared by the latest events, said they could not let more of their relatives be killed for their religious beliefs.

"During all the time that the Christian community lived in Iraq, we always respected their [Muslim] beliefs and they respected ours. Nowadays the only thing we see is our parents, sons, relatives being killed for praying to Jesus and it is unfair," said Maria Rita, a Christian widow and mother of three from Mosul.

"We need to leave this country because it isn't our land any more. We hope that the Christian community worldwide can help us by offering us a safer place to stay and prevent our community from shrinking further," Rita added.

Pakistan: Muslims apologize for attack on church

ISTANBUL (Compass Direct News) – Muslims who attacked a Pakistani church and declared religious war against Christians from mosque minarets have apologized for their actions, human rights workers said.

Police no longer stand guard around Gowindh village's sole church following its attackers' apology October 12, a Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) member told Compass.

No charges have been brought against the 300 Punjabi Muslim villagers who vandalized the New Apostolic Church at 6 a.m. October 10. The mob broke church windows, threw dung on its walls and cut wires to the church's loudspeaker.

But subsequent threats against Gowindh's Christians were even more serious than the initial attack, Mehboob Khan of the HRCP told Compass. Following these acts of vandalism, Muslim clerics called for jihad, Islamic holy war, against the Christian "infidels." The clerics issued the call from the town's eight mosques, Khan said.

Another HRCP worker who visited the village, located east of Lahore on the Indian border, said that the threats had included demands for Christians to convert to Islam. "Become Muslims or be prepared to fight or die," the clerics announced from the mosque loudspeakers, HRCP member Nadeem Anthony said. "This was the first time it happened, which is why the villagers were so scared."

According to Anthony, the New Apostolic Church is more than 60 years old, built before the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. Police arrived 12 hours after the early-morning vandalism, delayed in part by bad road conditions and the fact that no Christians in the village had a telephone with which to call them, Anthony said.

Their arrival halted plans for further violence but did not stop Muslims in the village of 10,000 from declaring a boycott on its Christian minority, some 300-strong. "Christians couldn't get anything from Muslims' shops," Gowindh Christian leader Sattar Masih told Sharing Life Ministries Pakistan, a Christian rights group that visited the area. "They couldn't go to the doctor as the doctors were Muslims."

Khan, who also traveled to Gowindh with a fact-finding team following the attack, said that Muslims were angered over the church's use of its loudspeaker. Members were using the amplifier to call the congregation to a prayer meeting each morning at 6 a.m.

Muslim villagers claimed that the call was interrupting fajr, the first of five daily Islamic calls to prayer made from the mosque minaret. They said that for months they had been asking the Christians not to use the loudspeaker, according to an article in English-language newspaper *Daily Times*.

According to Khan of the HRCP, fajr occurs at approximately 5 a.m., a full hour before Christians were using their loudspeaker.

Muhammad Sadiq, described as an influential Muslim in the village, initially claimed that there had been no attack on the church, according to the *Daily Times*.

"We have no grudges with the Christians," an article quoted Sadiq as saying. The leader only admitted that certain villagers had cut wires to the church loudspeaker.

But a source who requested anonymity said that a Muslim who had recently returned from training with militant extremist groups in Kashmir had instigated the violence. "He came back from military training and he had some propaganda against the Christians," said the source who visited the village following the attack. The militant had convinced other villagers that local Christians were agents of the United States working to convert Muslims to Christianity.

Pakistan and India have disputed the ownership of majority-Muslim Kashmir since the area's Hindu ruler chose to join India in 1947.

Under the supervision of supervisory police officer Athar Ismail, representatives of the Muslim community eventually promised to drop the boycott. "We apologize to the Christians for desecrating the church and hurting their religious sentiments," stated an apology signed by Muslim leaders on October 12, the Union for Catholic Asia News (UCAN) reported. Muslim community leaders signed the statement in the presence of 100 Muslims, Christian leaders and local police.

According to UCAN, the churchgoers decided not to use the loudspeaker for the first few days after the agreement was reached with the Muslims.

"We are even willing to pray at home to avoid further troubles," Sattar Masih told UCAN.

But Anthony of the HRCP told Compass that Gowindh Christians have now resumed use of the loudspeaker.

The incident is consistent with the ongoing pattern of isolated church attacks in Pakistan where perpetrators later apologize and avoid facing charges.

Christians make up approximately 1.5 percent of Pakistan's population, according to the U.S. State Department's 2007 Report on International Religious Freedom.

Anniversary

Celebrating 50 years of God's faithfulness

Students from the 1950s

Staff – some going back five decades

Jane Hoogendam-Reitsma

What a weekend of celebrative activities! What a show of God's faithfulness! Knox Christian School opened its doors in September 1957 to just under 100 smiling students and three pioneer teachers. The four-room building that was erected by volunteer labour received its roof lumber from the basement of Rehoboth CRC church. Parents watched the opening of the doors with anticipation and joy! What an answer to prayer.

I was one of those knobby-kneed, shy six-year-olds who walked down the halls of Knox in 1960. I vividly remember marching in every day to the tune of "Onward Christian Soldiers". Every week we memorized a new hymn in the whole-school choir. I remember Mrs. Groen, my first teacher and one of the original pioneers, with fond memories. She always had an encouraging word and a listening ear. She loved her students and, for me, learning to read was like opening up a whole new world. Knox's caring teachers in those early days sometimes worked under difficult conditions, such as large class sizes and very little curriculum. Nonetheless, they poured their hearts out for the children.

Why send children to a Christian school? I asked my mother (at the time, my family lived on a small dairy farm with nine children) and this was her response:

Why Christian education? The time when we came to Canada was in the mid-fifties. We had 7 young children. School started soon. Where to go? We landed in New Brunswick, and the public school was the only choice. After a time we were feeling "This is not right". Thinking back on our promises at the baptism of our children, we had to do something.

So we moved to an area where a school had started. To join a school takes effort for the parents and the children also. A long bus drive, tuition costs, and helping in events. But we managed with the help of the Lord. Now, after so many years we are so thankful for Christian education and how the generations have supported the schools.

Mrs. Japke Vanderhoek-Reitsma

Yes, I remember those long, bumpy, bus rides along old Scugog Road. Lasting friendships developed because we spent an hour each way sharing a small seat. One friend, Sylvia, and I used to play the memory game every day. Ironically, I'd forgotten some of those experiences until, at the anniversary, someone else said "I remember you, we drove on the bus together every day and I sat two seats behind you!"

School is more than the classroom, and one big part of Knox has always been the woods (which still exists today, although it's a bit smaller). Inter-grade friendships developed in the woods, endless forts were built and taken down, brave young boys went sailing over the creek on the "big rope" and sliding down the "big hill" on pieces of plastic. I recall whole groups of students coming late and dripping into school because they "fell in the creek". Yes, recess is definitely an important part of school. (We still have to settle "fort wars" when we are on "woods duty" at Knox. Who says the times have changed?)

It's hard to believe that fifty years have passed. Knox has so many things to be grateful for: three major building projects and a huge variety of teachers, administrators, caretakers, bus-drivers, secretaries, librarians, and even bus mechanics! Other memories include the zillions of pies that have been baked, our many annual bazaars, the blocks for Knox campaigns, the many volunteer hours of building projects as well as elaborate quilts and beautiful hand-made woodworking projects. Not to be forgotten – all the volunteers in the school sharing their love with the children!

With so much to celebrate, the anniversary events covered an entire weekend. Friday evening was a celebration of various dignitaries giving their congratulations and memories and a rousing jazz band performance. There was also a chance for alumni to meet each other after several decades: "*I hardly recognized you…or…you don't look any different…how's it going…I can't believe it's 42 years ago already, it feels like yesterday… .*" Mrs. Gladys Uitvlught, another one of the original three pioneer teachers, attended the festivities and was introduced with a rousing applause. Many alumni found that perusing the new facilities, which were brightly adorned with student artwork and decorations, was a highlight of the evening. The heritage wall, mounted just hours before people started arriving, was stupendous!

Saturday included children's activities, Sunshine the Clown, jumping castles and volleyball madness. (What's Knox without volleyball?) A banquet finished the day with more speeches and entertainment and memories galore. A group of "fifties" students sat around one table laughing and prattling in Frisian about "ierpels" and "fleis". Mr. Jules DeJager (former Knox teacher and presently the principal in Cambridge) entertained the audience with memories of the "*determined, independent, stubborn, curt, rude, chauvinistic, Dutch (excuse me- Frisian) Calvinistic*" Bowmanville community. (Only someone from Alberta can get away with such adjectives).

Jules DeJager left us, on a more serious note, with a challenge to carry on the torch.

Teachers: "Be faithful to your Christian profession. You are charged to work out the vision of Christian education in wisdom and truth for the students and the school…. Teach to affirm the training of responsible disciples in service to Christ…. Stoke your passion for Christian education.

Community: Love this school with all our heart…. Pray for Knox, the students and the staff. Pray for the Board and committee leadership that guides this place…. Keep your passion hot! …. Celebrate the great cause of Christian Education!"

There was a celebrative service of thanksgiving for God's faithfulness through the generations on Sunday. Original members who remember raising the roof on the first building joined in with young and old singing God's praises! Great is Thy Faithfulness!

Ten years ago, at Knox's 40th anniversary, Mr. Dirk Brinkman wrote a letter to the grade seven students at the time. He was one of the founding members of the school, and his letter ends with these words:

"Is it not remarkable that the Lord blessed this school over forty years with so many blessings, with all our faults and shortcomings? It is with deep gratitude that we may recall all these struggles and blessings. We must also recognize the faithfulness of the mothers who so steadfastly sent Knox the children and worked like beavers by fundraising, being teacher helpers and you name it. May prayers for the school continue in the future and blessings also."

Praise the Lord! May God's faithfulness be never-ending.

Jane Hoogendam-Reitsma is the Vice Principal and Resource Teacher at Knox Christian School, Bowmanville and is also a Knox graduate (1967).

1960s alumni

Stewardship

Women's rights and political Islam *by Donna Hughes*

I want to tell you how I came to understand the threat of Islamic fundamentalism to women, girls, and their rights. This occurred long before 9-11. In 1994 to 1996, I worked as a Lecturer at the University of Bradford in England. The city of Bradford has the largest population of Pakistanis outside of Pakistan.

Soon after I arrived in Bradford, a young Muslim woman was murdered. She was run down by a car driven by a family member as she was walking on the sidewalk to work. This was what is called an "honor killing," in which women and girls are killed by family members for disobeying their fathers or for being too independent. She wanted freedom from an arranged marriage and rigid cultural constraints on her life as a woman.

At the University of Bradford, I was in charge of a women's studies major. We had several Asian women, as the Pakistani and Indian women were called, in the course. I soon learned that all of them were being pressured to drop out of school and accept arranged marriages. They were guilt-tripped, threatened, and sometimes beaten. I soon realized that staying enrolled at the university was the only thing that helped them maintain a moderate level of freedom and independence. If they dropped out, they would be forced into marriage. A couple of the women couldn't resist the constant pressure. They came to my office and told me they were dropping out of school and accepting their family's plans for them. They tried to put a good face on it.

Some women were beaten by their families to force them out of school. I learned how common this was when I made inquiries on how we could help a frightened, exhausted young woman. The University maintained a set of rooms in the halls of residence for women who needed emergency shelter each semester.

On a regular basis, I saw the political campaigns of the Islamists. Groups, such as Hizb ut-Tahir, which is now banned, had literature tables in the lobby of the building where I worked. I often stopped and picked up the pamphlets, I was particularly interested in what they said about women and women's rights. Their goal was, and is, to unify all Muslim countries into one Islamic state ruled by Islamic or sharia law. They predicted that in the near future, they would take over the UK and turn it into an Islamic state.

Their literature stated that they would advance women's rights by protecting them from the kind of harassment and violence that western women are subjected to. Wearing the veil or hijab would protect them from sexual harassment and sexual assault. The political tracts stated that they respected women and would allow women to stay in the home and take care of their families where they would be protected by their fathers, brothers, and husbands. These were not presented as choices for women, but their roles and destinies under Islamic rule.

Islamo-Fascism *...cont. from p.5*

own campus community. He wrote: "Without their willingness to stand up and be counted, there would have been no Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week." Here is Horowitz's summary of the impact as well as the reaction of the critics to these public events:

The week of October 22-26 witnessed the largest, most successful campus demonstrations by students not associated with the anti-American left in the history of campus protests. 114 college and university campuses participated in "Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week," which highlighted the threat from the Islamic jihad, and the oppression of women....

In response, anti-American leftists and organizations supporting the Islamic jihad organized a national campaign of vitriol and hate that was almost unprecedented. This campaign revealed the lengths to which the anti-American left will go to prevent the *public from discussing the nature of the holy war that has been declared on them.*

These shocking events demonstrate how brazenly the enemies of freedom operate quite openly in the U.S. Their gall has no bounds as they promote one of the most tyrannical religious systems, while resorting to threats of violence and brutal character assassinations of those who thoughtfully defend our traditional freedoms, and do so in a civilized manner.

**More information about these events can be found at* FrontPageMagazine.com.

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Reflections on Stewardship
Rick De Graaf

Balanced giving

In my last column, we focused on the impact (the 'push-pull') of media on our lives and reflected on how we are constantly bombarded with messages: advertising that nudges and urges us to spend our resources and time their way. In contrast, however, the messages that urge us to engage our gifts of time, talents, homes, businesses, farms and money and possessions for the work of the church are almost non-existent. Yet even though the church may be very quiet, many charities are not – at least not when it comes to filling our mailboxes!

How can a Christian be wise and discerning when it comes to the mailbox requests or even telephone soliciting? How can we decide what should be supported or not? I don't know about you, but Edith and I get all kinds of requests. I am certain some charities have been trading donor lists. A gift to the Heart and Stroke Foundation (a heart attack took my Father's life), the Parkinson's Foundation (my father-in-law has it) and to the MS society (a dear friend has it) has led to an avalanche of requests from many others. The list of societies and foundations that exist and make their appeals to us grows every year. Presently, Edith and I have mailing labels and Christmas cards from so many of these that it's becoming a real environmental stewardship issue.

How does a steward balance all the requests that come? Simple answer: by planning. That means setting priorities and "giving" goals.

When it comes to most of the mailbox requests, with an occasional exception (e.g. the War Amps key tag service) all the requests that Edith and I get go into a file that gets opened in early December. It doesn't matter whether or not they have a spring, summer and autumn campaign – it gets processed the same way! We list 'mailbox' requests at the bottom end of our giving priorities.

It's up to you to set your own priority list that determines the balance of your giving, but it is very important to have one. Here is our priority list:

1. **Church**: We are members of Maranatha CRC and therefore we are its stewards. We care and provide for its ministry through our planned gifts. Every fall our Church runs an "Estimated Giving" campaign where members are asked to participate in a process that culminates in our re-committing our resources for the work of the church. This campaign reminds us each year to consult each other, to give thanks and to seek God's blessing on the commitments we make. There is a special moment in a special worship service where our commitments along with others are brought forward in a special offering to consecrate them to the Lord. It is an acknowledgment that we can not carry out our commitments without the Lord's help and blessing.
2. **Compassion**: Some of this is planned, for example our gifts for Darfur with CRWRC, and the rest comes from funds set aside from any extras gleaned from surprise income or sales etc. We call this our "God pot" and it is available for when the need arises.
3. **Kingdom ministries**: Twice a year, Edith and I sit down and decide who and how much to give to ministries that are close to our heart – this usually corresponds with the times when we are paid for another flock of chickens
4. **Christian education**: a priority for us at all levels. Often there is a campaign that we end up responding to – but it does not really influence the amount of our giving, just the timing.
5. **Secular foundations**: As in the introductory paragraph – we collect the various appeal letters and open up the file in early December. What determines who gets and how much? Answer: our hearts and connection to the cause.
6. **Special needs**: Like compassion giving, there will be requests to support someone's walk-a-thon or a friend or family member who suddenly has an unexpected financial burden (loss of job or accident or illness) – we will consider and respond as they come up (often using the 'God pot'). Edith and I no longer respond to telephone requests – if we do consider a gift, we require that they send something in the mail so that we might consider more evidence to support their request (see Steward's tip below).

Whenever possible, we will take advantage of Charitable Tax receipts – so that we are able to reduce our income tax. It is not what drives our giving – but it enables us to give even more.

For Edith and me, giving is special and an occasion for gratitude. God has blessed us richly – and he has given us so much – yet who is there that can out-give God? We have a generous God and that is why Kingdom causes are at the top of our priority list.

Stewardly tip: do research. When a request comes your way that 'tugs' at you but you're not sure if you should give – do a little digging. Check if the cause is listed on the Canada Revenue Agency Charity listing – www.cra.gc/donors where over 80,000 charities are listed *(check the brochure and fridge magnet recently mailed to you by them)*. If it is a Christian charity – see if it is has the CCCC (Canadian Council of Christian Charities – www.cccc.org) seal of approval [159 are so certified]. For USA based agencies, check the ECFA. In order to be listed, charities and foundations have to meet a strict set of standards (CCCC/EFCA are more stringent with disclosures that have to be met for their seal of approval). If they are not and you are still interested – ask for a financial statement. When it comes to requests from some foreign country – don't give unless the cause is accountable to a known registered charity in Canada. There is often a valid reason why they do not have a Canadian partner!

Readers: Share your 'Stewardly tips' so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestions (by mail to *Christian Courier* or by email to my address below) and provide your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask you for more details.

Next issue: Annual checkup

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Memoirs

Memories of the Resistance

Part 1 – The Early Years

We begin here the memoirs of Pieter Strayer which he wrote before his death in 1993. A large part concerns the war years, but this opening segment recalls details from the life of an ordinary family living on one of the islands of Zeeland during the pre-war years. His story is engaging and gives enough detail to hold our interest. We hope you enjoy Pieter Strayer's recollections.

HdN

I was born on April 28, 1916, to Gilles and Willemina Straijer, in the village of Burghsluis. I had three sisters – five, four, and three years old. Between my three year-old sister and myself, my mother also had twins but they died in infancy.

Our village was located in the province of Zeeland on the island Schouwen Duiveland, the Netherlands. Burghsluis had only thirteen homes. It was actually made up of two villages – the new Sluis and the old Sluis. The old village belonged to Burgh and the new part belonged to Haamstede. We lived in new Sluis, although it didn't look new, because the houses were all old.

We went to school in Haamstede, a three kilometer walk each way. It was too far to go home for lunch, so we ate at the home of an aunt. When we look at the traffic on the roads now, my children ask me, "Were there many automobiles when you were young?" Yes, there were cars when I was small. I had a little friend who lived close by and we went for a walk over the dike sometimes. Maybe once a week or so we would see an automobile coming way in the distance. The land was flat so you could see over a five kilometer stretch. We ran down to see if we had seen that car before, because we wrote down the plate numbers and knew if it had come by on another day. We handled the sightings of motorbikes in the same way.

We were located on the North Sea, and boats went in and out from our village to fish. My friend's father was the village baker and also the barkeeper for the fishermen. He had a large barrel of raisins in his shed for making raisin bread. There was a building on the dike called "shipper's hall" where fishermen would meet and exchange news and ideas. Once in a while, my friend would fill his pockets with raisins and we would sneak off to "shipper's hall" to eat them. This provided some excitement to our childhood days.

The house we lived in was small, real small. We rented it from a farmer. After a few years, we had to move since he needed the house for a farmhand. Our next home in Burgh, located amid pastures, was also quite small. About one hundred meters away lived our grandmother. Close by, on the other side of the house, there was a graveyard. And whenever we had to go to the village, we would have to take the small path that ran alongside the graveyard.

When we lived there I had my first girlfriend. She was about my age – four or five years old. From her mother we would sometimes get a half penny – about the value of a quarter today. For two half pennies you could buy ten to twelve "dropjies" (liquorice candies). We would hold each other as we walked on the path past the graveyard on our way to the store.

By this time I also had another sister, three years younger. Then a brother Adrian was born. He was the third one to be called Adrian, the other two having died in infancy. Adrian lived only two months. I clearly remember the day a man with a spade over his shoulder and a little box under his arm came to the house. The doctor was with him to fill in the papers for the burial. My mother was crying and this made us all cry, of course. She was holding the baby. The doctor took it from her and said: "Mina, this child is no longer yours. He now belongs to the Lord."

They then took my brother. I thought I have to see where they bring the baby, so I went along outside and saw that they went to the graveyard. Later, I went back to the graveyard to get my brother and bring him home. However, when I got there, the gate was locked and I couldn't crawl under the fence. In the meantime, my mother said, "Go and see where Piet is." So my sister came looking for me and brought me home. Shortly thereafter, we moved back to Burghsluis.

Our home in Burghsluis was located two houses from where I was born and it was much larger. It belonged to our uncle who had built a new house for himself for a cost of about 1500 guilders. He worked on a freighter and my father started to work there also. Before this my father worked in a cable factory in Delft and bicycled home every two weeks, taking a ferry from the mainland to the island.

Usually four of us were going to school at any one time. However, when it was pouring rain, we could stay home since we didn't have any rain-clothes. We only had coats for cold weather but they got soaking wet fast and there was no place at school to dry them. The younger children were allowed to stay home more often than the older ones. As you can imagine, my mother was relieved when she could get us out of the door in the morning.

The school had a little over a hundred pupils. There were one female and two male teachers and a principal. The principal taught grades six, seven and eight. There were rarely any pupils in grade eight and one or two in grade seven. The principal also taught other languages but only to children of well-to-do parents. Then, for high school, you had to go to The Hague or Rotterdam and stay with relatives. There was no high school on the island. That came later on, when the roads were made of bricks and you could go by bus or bike. At this time, just to go to Zierikzee, for instance, meant taking a spare tire and tools to repair the bike. The roads were that bad.

I was eleven years old when I finished school (grade six). I was small for my age, about 114 centimetres – under 4 feet, and people would ask why such a little boy wasn't in school. Anyway, I went to work for a farmer and earned three guilders a week. Because I was young, I started at six o'clock in the morning instead of five and worked until half past five in the afternoon. We got a break on Saturdays – we only had to work until five o'clock. I worked for the farmer until we moved.

Once in a while, my father would be a deckhand on a boat that a wealthy manufacturer, Mr. VanSchaik, leased. They hunted seals and sometimes would bring one back with them. The seals were boiled and the oil was used to smooth leather. This process had to be done away from the village since it smelled so bad. Mr VanSchaik and my father got to know each other well and on one of the outings, Mr. VanSchaik said: "You have quite a large family. You should buy a house."

My father said he didn't have even enough money to cover legal fees which was about 60 guilders. Mr. VanSchaik said he would look after it. And that is what happened. He arranged for my oldest sister, Mina, to work as a maid for his wife. She already had three or four maids but could still use another one. The VanSchaiks lived in Wassenaar and the payments for the house loan was deducted from her wages. This was ten guilders per month out of a monthly wage of thirty to forty guilders. In those days, you had to show you could repay a loan by having the year's payments in advance. Each year, my father had to show 120 guilders but the bank manager, Blom, would sign the paper that my father was good for it even though he didn't have the 120 guilders ahead of time. Our new home in Westenschouwen cost two thousand guilders. It was one of two houses that had been built from left-over materials when an old parsonage was torn down.

I started working for a doctor delivering medication by bicycle to the five villages in our area. There were no drugstores and the doctor made the medicine ready in his office and they had to be delivered in the afternoon. I earned four and a half guilders weekly at first and then it went up to six guilders. I was thirteen years old when I started this job.

When the doctor went to Switzerland for six weeks, we got a replacement from Friesland. Although I was only fourteen, he said he would teach me to drive. I told him I had to be eighteen to drive but he said that was nonsense. I had to go with him to visit patients since I knew the area. One day he told me to get behind the wheel. I had to sit on my coat in order to see between the dashboard and the rounding of the steering wheel. I could not reach the pedals so the doctor worked the gas. Of course we went too fast for me and I felt scared. He said: "If you don't drive well, I will slap you." I remember heading towards a farmer's wagon and I asked the doctor to drive since I didn't think I could make it past but he said to drive on and sped the car up. He sure made a good

I was the little guy in the class.

Farm couple embraces stewardship...*and God saw that it was good*

Sowing the seeds of stewardship with God's land saved this family's farm

Don Ruzicka

My wife Marie and I farm north of Killam in east central Alberta. We bought the farm in 1983 that my grandfather settled in 1909. We farmed grain and cattle conventionally until 1995. Then, the seeds of stewardship were planted on our farm and they have continued to grow and flourish. My simple definition of stewardship is looking after something or caring for it. Why do some people choose to care for it and why do others not make this choice? This is a question that I find myself asking with greater frequency. I have searched for answers in many places and have read books by many great authors. Two of my favourite authors are Aldo Leopold and Edward O. Wilson. One reason that I zero in on these two is because they have tried to explain stewardship. Wilson gives me great hope. He claims that we all are hard wired to care for nature. However, in order to manifest this, we require a catalyst, something to ignite the flame of stewardship.

Leopold speaks about the existence of an ecological conscience that is based on a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land. If we take notice of nature, we can actually develop an ecological conscience. Nature grows on us.

Farm-saving message

By 1995 we had managed to dig ourselves a fairly deep financial hole by farming conventionally and were thinking about leaving the farm. A flyer arrived in the mail advertising a concept called Holistic Management. The flyer posed the question, "Would you like to get off the agribusiness treadmill?" This was the hook. Marie and I signed up for the eight-day course. Holistic Management taught us that our farm was made up of many parts and all of the parts had to work in harmony for the farm to run efficiently. Clean water, healthy soils and wildlife habitat were just a few of the things that we had to focus on. If the land is not environmentally sustainable, it can never be economically sustainable.

Farmer Don Ruzicka and his wife Marie

HM is profoundly simple: decide what you want in life, link it to your production model, open your mind to new thinking and use that as a simple framework to bring in

Continued on p. 14

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driver out of me!

My delivery days ended soon after the other doctor returned and I stayed home and helped my dad. On Mondays, we sold petroleum, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays, we sold fish that was shipped in from Ijmuiden. We also picked apples and red currants.

At about this time, 1929/30, we were in the recession and there was a lot of unemployment. A job creation program (the "werkverschaffing") came into effect. Everyone who couldn't find work went to the Klerksen-dune. Here they could help plant bunches of straw to keep the sand from blowing. You were allowed to work a maximum of three days. My father worked at this but I would take his place if he couldn't go. I was actually too young but my uncle was foreman. In this way, we received an income of about seven guilders a week. I also tried to sell mussels and snails and sea-kraal – anything to earn some money.

This picture, some of my sisters and my brother, was taken on my parent's anniversary.

My sister Adrie also went to work as a maid in The Hague. The lady she worked for was the daughter of Mrs. VanSchaik. But Adrie was not shy and soon demanded to be paid more. This was risky since there were German girls anxious to work in Holland for less pay since the guilder was high compared to the German mark. (Rumor had it that the German girls were sent in to spy). But Adrie with her big mouth got away with it and made ten guilders more than my sister Mina. Upon hearing this Mina got up the courage to ask for a raise too. Adrie was a good cook and learned things quickly and was able to earn more. But by and by she would tire of something and move on to other jobs in The Hague. Yet both girls would send a portion of their earnings home.

In 1936, my parents celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. All thirteen of us were there. We looked forward to coffee and cookies. But it certainly turned out differently than expected. When we looked out in the morning, there was an arch made from evergreen branches and a flag on top. Shortly after, the baker came with all kinds of cakes and baked goods and also the shoe repairman with a couple of bottles of liquor. The townsfolk all visited and some gave money. Even the teacher, who had given the children time off, brought ten guilders. She also wrote a poem saying we were the best customers of the school. My maternal grandparents also came for the day. But my grandfather kept looking at the clock and thinking of all the work that he would have to catch up on. I'll never forget it because my grandmother said: "Don't look at the clock all the time", and then she climbed a chair and stopped the clock. They didn't leave until dawn the next morning. My uncle, who was a bit of a clown, entertained people throughout the evening. All in all it was a joyous occasion.

By 1937, my brother was old enough to leave school and start work for a farmer. The following year another brother, Jan, also joined the workforce. He went to work for Willem Boot. My grandfather had worked for this farmer for fifty years and my mother worked there as a maid when she was in her teens. Boot asked how much Dalebout was paying Johan. Jan said six gilders so then Boot paid him seven guilders. When Johan heard what Jan was getting, he told his boss and then he got paid seven guilders also. The two farmers had a sort of rivalry going and whenever Jan got a raise, Johan would also get one. Before long, they were both getting nine guilders a week. This was quite a bit for the boys since an adult wage was about twelve guilders a week. Now life was getting a bit easier especially for my mother.

However, in 1938, my father became sick. He gained a lot of weight whereas he had always weighed around one hundred and twenty pounds before. Excess food certainly wasn't the cause since, as the Dutch saying goes: where the hogs are many, the gruel is thin. He had to go to the hospital and whatever they found out, we didn't hear about. He was transferred to a hospital in Goes and was diagnosed as disabled. This entitled us to a pension of three guilders per week.

At this time I was working in the dunes putting handfuls of bent grass in holes that were dug for that purpose. Boys were paid a guilder daily but the adults got ten guilders eighty cents per week. When the foreman heard that my dad, who also had worked in the dunes, was ill, he started paying me the adult wage. It was nice of him since I was now the breadwinner in the family.

By 1939, items like bread and butter were being rationed. Germany was gaining more and more power and war seemed inevitable. We were a large family and got a lot of food ration coupons. A neighbourhood farmwife bought coupons from my mother sometimes. She would say: "Mina, you don't have the money to buy all that food anyway, so you can sell them to me." Before long, however, my mother stopped doing business with the farmwife. With me and my brothers working, we didn't need her money so desperately.

I had a friend by the name of Lambreht whose father was a tree grower. I started a job driving truck for them. Lambreht was dating a girl by the name of Tonnie Kristalyn. One day I said to Lambreht, "She's your girl now but I am the one who'll marry her." And that is exactly what happened.

This was not to be my only truck driving job. A man by the name of Bouwman ran a freight delivery service between Renesse and Zierikzee. One day, he stepped out of the truck the wrong way and broke his leg. He asked me to drive for him so he could continue his business. I had this job for quite awhile. It so happened Bouwman wasn't too keen on working and was content to collect insurance and let me keep on driving.

In the meantime, a farmer by the name of Noordhoek, also began a trucking service and soon had five or six trucks. One evening, after dark, he came into our home. There were no lights in the bedrooms and he felt around looking for my father but his hand hit my mother's head instead. He told her to go back to sleep and to my father he said: "Tell your son that I want to talk to him. I would like to have him as a driver." And so I began yet another job.

An airport was located outside of Haamstede adjacent to the VanDamme farm. The farm is called "Groenewoud". (My sister, Jans, married Piet VanDamme and they live on the propery now.) Anyway, at the airport, pilots trained using small two-winged planes. For target practice, they would attach a bag on a steel cable hanging from one airplane and shoot at it from another. These planes weren't fast and the pilots heads were in the open. The planes didn't have much speed and when they landed, it was rough. Sometimes the wheels flew from under and they would slid further on their bellies. My job as truck driver brought me to the airport since I had to fill in holes and uneven spots. I would also use the truck to deliver food to the guards and do other odds and ends.

Next Issue– The War Years

Corinthians

The core of the tradition

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures....

I Cor. 15:3,4

A.A. van Ruler

I Cor. 15 is about the resurrection, but the text indicates that there is something else that must be discussed at the same time. Paul speaks not just about the resurrection but also about the death of Jesus Christ. These two belong together. We understand the meaning of his death only from the resurrection, namely, that he died for our sins. And the fact that this was truly a resurrection can be understood only when we remember that it is a resurrection from the dead.

Paul tells the Corinthians that he has passed both of these things on to them. So in his proclamation he has passed on many other things to them as well. The gospel is a rich unity that encompasses many things. But in the foreground, at the center, these two things have stood together as one: the death and the resurrection of the Christ. This is the real substance of the gospel and the foundation of the church. From this core all the rest must be understood: the incarnation of the Word, the life and work of Jesus, his suffering, his ascension and his return. Our actual salvation is found in his death and resurrection. This is the messianic work par excellence: that our guilt is removed and the chains of death broken. It is this that must be proclaimed before anything else.

Objectivity and tradition

This proclamation is, therefore, in the first place objective. The subjective side actually cannot be proclaimed. It can be described, and we can rejoice on the basis of this experience. So the subjective is part of it, and it is the proper life of the church. But this is the fundamental rule of all Christian thought: that the subjective originates from the objective; experience is born from the gospel. And before anything else the gospel includes that Jesus Christ died and arose for us and also apart from us.

Paul's words are notable in this regard; he says, "What I received I passed on to you...." By this he means to say that it is not his own experience that he is passing on. At its core the gospel did not arise from the heart and spirit of any human being, not even from that of an apostle. The first received it from the latter, and both received it from God.

Behind it is revelation. God performed acts in history. And these are retold. "We hear them declaring the wonders [works] of God," said the crowd at Pentecost (Acts 2: 11). The death and resurrection of Christ are not universal truths that symbolize the processes of life. They are acts of God.

So for our religion and our eternal salvation we are placed in the middle of the field of history. Our entire relationship with God is hereby made historical. But there are more historical figures around the cross and resurrection, namely, the people of Israel, the Bible, the church, dogma, Christian culture. Revelation awakens faith, but faith is the readiness to live from and in this specific historical form.

This historical core of the Christian religion also endows it with the characteristic of tradition. This is to say, that tradition has redemptive meaning. God's acts need to be told. They are passed on, handed over, delivered. So as Christians we stand in the middle of this process of handing over tradition. It gives us life.

There is also something traditional about it in the common sense of the word. The Christian religion contains primal words that we cannot do without. We can hardly translate them. Those who come from outside the church simply must acquaint themselves with this language at certain points. No matter how far we go in our efforts to translate, we will never be entirely successful without betraying the Word of God.

Entombment of Christ by Pieter Lastman (1583-1633)

Authority and revelation

Part of it is that faith depends upon authority. The acts of God are told, and the story as such calls for a strong measure of authority. We cannot reason behind it. They are facts that are related as facts. We must believe them or not. When we become aware of the vibrations of revelation behind those facts, we are overwhelmed by this authority that comes to us, overpowering our hearts and spirits. This passing on happens in every sermon and every witness. It is a relay race that goes on through the ages.

Yet, it does not begin purely with the facts of salvation of Jesus Christ. Behind and around these is a world of history. Twice Paul says what happened in Jesus Christ happened according to the Scriptures. He died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and he arose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures. The Old Testament as the story of God's history with the people of Israel is the great legitimator of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

However, if we search through the Old Testament for texts that specifically speak of the cross and the resurrection, we discover that these appear only very sporadically, if at all. So we must understand Paul's new Testament words differently. They do not mean, it seems to me, that the Old Testament speaks in so many words about the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He means that the Old Testament discovers with increasing depth that the relationship between God and man is such that we become ever more entangled in guilt and death, and that therefore only God is mighty and willing to bring atonement and victory over death. This is what the Old Testament sees: that only God himself is capable of taking on the problems of humanity. And this happened in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So everything comes down to these two phrases: that Christ died *for our sins* and that he was raised *on the third day*.

The third day should be understood in this sense, says Kohlbrugge: there is a time and a day of suffering and death, followed by a time and a day of sinking down without the prospect of redemption, and then a time and a day in which the promises are fulfilled and our redemption is confirmed.

This points to the new – the intervening help of God. Things had run into a dead end. There was no longer any escape. Mankind had to yield himself and his works without holding anything back. And then, after the third day, God comes, after it has all passed radically through death contrary to all our expectations and anticipations.

This is also an indication of God's haste; he arises early and hurries to come to our help. God has waited but only to see whether we are wholly ensnared in death and that we have wholly given up. When we fully recognize and acknowledge God's judgment, that is to say, when we accept that he has indeed died for our sins, then on the third day the resurrection happens. The judgment of God is then complete and the glory of God arises over the world.

Eating my words
Angela Bick

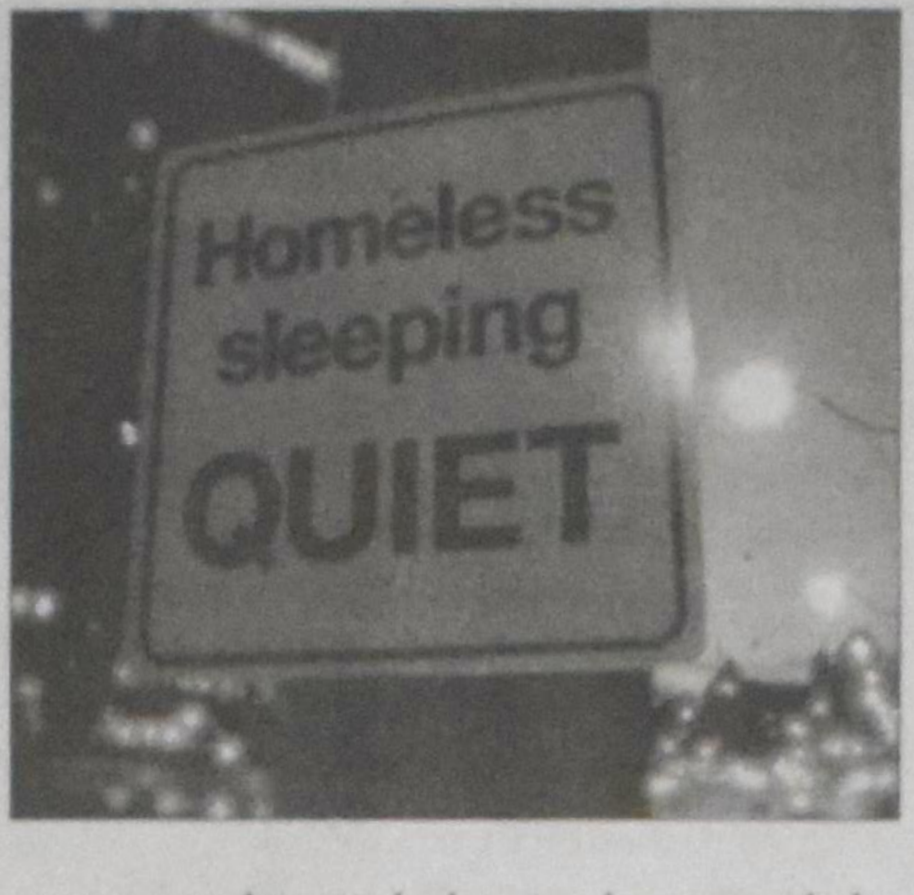
Jesus was a homeless man

I blame the upholstered, bullet-proof apartment door for the night I was homeless in Moscow. Somehow, during our first day teaching English, the heavy metal door swung shut and locked. My husband had been given a key for the wooden outer door only. Our apartment was tiny (about two hundred square feet) and crowded with bulky, decrepit furniture, but it was all we had. Tired and hungry and on the wrong side of the door, we searched our pockets and found 100 rubles, two metro passes, and a scrap of paper with our new boss's phone number. Not enough money for a hotel.

We tramped down the uneven cement steps into the warm August evening and viewed the neighbourhood with entirely new eyes, wondering where we could sleep safely. Even in your own country, I think this type of search is terrifying. Night can make the familiar seem alien. I found myself walking quickly although we had nowhere to go. My husband thought of sleeping in a Metro car, as we'd seen others do, but the trains stopped running at one o'clock. If we wanted to use the well-lit security of the underground, we had two hours to find somewhere to stay.

We traveled across the city to a friend's address but, having only been there once, couldn't find our way to his apartment. Finally, after midnight, we used our last few kopeks to call our British boss. We ended up sleeping on his living room floor, teaching the next day in the clothes we'd slept in, and learning to count these among our blessings. When the Russian landlady opened it with a scowl the next night, our ugly little apartment had never looked so welcoming. It was downright cozy, and we were not ungrateful for it again.

Last April, Toronto art student Mark Daye bolted thirty aluminum signs to poles along Lake Shore Blvd, displaying messages such as "Quiet: Homeless People Sleeping." Daye said that he wanted "to make people think about codes of behavior, conformity . . . [to] spare some consideration for the homeless who live mostly ignored in the city, blending into the background just like the signs." Unfortunately, city officials cited



an encroachment bylaw and removed the signs within a day, but not before countless commuters caught a glimpse.

Being ignored is just one of the hardships that the homeless – even those who choose such a life – face. The 40,000 people living on Toronto's streets are homeless for any number of reasons: maybe they've escaped abusive relationships or dangerous countries; perhaps they've been evicted and can't find affordable rental housing. The city of Toronto website says that there are a rising number of pregnant women and young couples with children (we tend to think of the homeless as old-fashioned hoboes – single men over thirty).

Think of the word "homesick" (which could also have applied to me in Russia); having a home is such a powerful thing that we talk about being sick when we're away from it. In his first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul mentions homelessness among the trials of hunger, thirst, and persecution. The New York Coalition for the Homeless made the point that Jesus was also homeless. They ran an ad in the New York Times with the following caption: "How can you worship a homeless man on Sunday and ignore one on Monday?"

There's a Christian Reformed youth group from Bowmanville with an answer to that question. On October 13, Maranatha's teenagers headed to downtown Toronto with 100 home-made lunches – an inexpensive and simple ministry. They discussed tactics while traveling into the city on the GO train. "Don't overwhelm the homeless individuals," one leader cautioned. "Imagine if it was you – if they're offended by your offer, walk away." The youth decided to hand out the lunches with a simple "God Bless," to spend the day as Jesus' hands and feet, rather than his mouth.

A few of the youth were worried about how to identify homeless people. Early in the afternoon, Natasha Piersma and her group met two teens in the public washroom at Nathan Phillips Square. It was a guy and a girl – very shy, huddled together for warmth. They had two sleeping bags and a backpack, and the offer of lunch brought tears: they hadn't eaten for a week. If the church's youth had romanticized life on the streets before this, the dirty blankets and dingy bathroom quickly dispelled any ideals. Piersma left as many lunches as the teens would accept.

A second Maranatha group was startled to see a box, a microwave, an electrical cord, and four or five people in sleeping bags under the off-ramp behind the Square's skate rental. These are some of Toronto's "hardcore homeless"– so-called by city officials because they live outside year-round in makeshift housing. Besides lunches, some of the youth wanted to give away their shoes, coats and money. "It hit them all differently," said one of the youth group's leaders, "yet they all felt good about the experience. They all want to do more."

Though exhausted, the youth were full of plans on the return GO ride. A few mentioned wanting to hand out lunches with blankets and warm clothes next time, to homeless teens they've seen in Oshawa. "But we can't afford to buy stuff!" someone protested. "Then we'll ask for it," said Henri Piersma, a group leader. "We'll write a professional letter and ask businesses for money; then we'll ask Zellers for some cheap wool – which they might give us if we tell them what it's for; then we'll ask the seniors at our church to knit hats and mitts – which they might do if we give them the wool. . . ." The discussion lasted all the way home.

Two weeks after handing out lunches in Toronto, Maranatha's youth group attended a praise and worship rally in Hamilton called "Acquire the Fire." Providentially, I was in town too. They had a long day of workshops and services on Saturday, so I sent along four dozen Sunflower Chip Cookies – a slightly healthier version of chocolate chip cookies, but just as tasty.

Imagine the joy on a homeless person's face if you gave him the one thing he doesn't have and can't buy: cookies, home-made.

Sunflower Chip Cookies

¾ c. whole wheat flour
½ c. wheat germ
2 Tbsp. dry milk powder
½ tsp. baking soda
Mix together and set aside.
½ c. butter, softened
½ c. brown sugar
1 egg
½ tsp. vanilla
Cream these four ingredients together.
Stir in dry ingredients.

1 c. chocolate chips *or* **raisins**
½ c. roasted sunflower seeds
½ c. chopped peanuts
Stir in and drop by rounded teaspoons on greased baking sheets.
Bake in preheated oven at 350F for 8-10 minutes.

Angela Reitsma Bick lives in Barrie, Ontario. Send your interesting stories or recipes to: al_angbick@hotmail.com.

Farm couple embraces stewardship ... continued from p.11

new tools and make decisions in a socially and environmentally sound way. It has changed our life, the way we farm and most importantly, how we have come to view the land. It is also the "catalyst" that Wilson speaks about. It ignited that stewardship flame for us.

When the snow melted in the spring of 1996, I saw the farm in a totally different light. Our native pasture was overgrazed. There was an abundance of sage and yarrow, a sign that things were out of balance. Too many trees had been cleared in previous years as well as too many wetlands drained. The agribusiness model had taught me to look at the farm as a business. The more I complied, the more damage I did to the land.

Over the next two years, we seeded the entire farm to grass and legumes. Our land base is 200 acres of native pasture and 600 acres of tame pasture. We custom graze yearlings and own 25 cows. We raise hogs, chickens, laying hens and turkeys, all on pasture. We also have a large garden with fruit trees, strawberries and raspberries. In 1997, I fenced off our creeks. One of our goals is to have the water coming down the creek to be as clean or cleaner when it leaves. We bought a portable solar powered pumping system to pump water to the cattle so that they wouldn't mess in the creek.

Ecological conscience sprouts

In January 1998, the Cows and Fish people came to our county and gave a presentation on riparian health. Earlier, I mentioned Aldo Leopold and the concept of an "ecological conscience." After this presentation, I started to connect the dots and my ecological conscience began developing.

The fences did more than keep the cattle out of the water; they helped to protect and rebuild sensitive riverbank areas that are so valuable to wildlife. Ducks Unlimited built a project on our creek in 1991. This was not an act of stewardship on my part. I needed water for our livestock on this quarter section. With a dam in place, we would have ample water. Six years after the project was completed, I asked DU to come back and explain what I could do to encourage habitat on this project and on the rest of our farm. I was surprised when they told me that by deferring grazing on my native pasture, I could encourage upland game to nest. Now we don't graze our native pasture until after Sept. 15. Wildlife has the undisturbed use of this land for habitat from spring until fall. We have planted trees almost every year since 1983. Planting trees helped us to set a landscape goal for the farm of planting two rows of trees around the perimeter of every quarter and in some cases down the centre.

Bring on the birds

Leopold mentions that berry bushes attract birds. I thought that when these bushes bore fruit the birds would show up. Rather, it is when the berry bushes flower that they attract insects and the birds come for the insects. Wildlife also use these treed corridors to move around our farm. Last year we planted six one-acre plots of 16 different species of trees including conifers, deciduous and berry bushes – 800 trees in each plot. It is our hope that these new bushes will attract more wildlife.

The pigs on the Ruzicka farm.

Another part of our landscape goal was to put birdhouses around the farm. In 2001, I built 150 birdhouses and put 30 on each of our five quarter sections. The occupancy rate was 27 per cent the first year and rose steadily to 84 per cent in 2005. We now have 200 birdhouses. Some interesting things are happening. When the grasshopper population got out of control in 2002 and 2003, we didn't have a problem on our farm. A lot of our birdhouse residents were feasting on the larvae as well as the hoppers.

Welcome insects

Some insects that hang out around our shelterbelt trees also pollinate the various plants, grasses and legumes in the pastures. We have 10 dugouts that are fenced off from livestock access. The grass growing up around the water provides excellent habitat for dragonflies. Mosquitoes hassle our livestock. Dragonflies eat mosquitoes and small grasshoppers. I recently met an ornithologist who claims that there is a decline in swallow populations. We raise our poultry in pens out on the pasture. Every morning I move the pens 12 feet ahead. As soon as the pens are moved, there is a frenzy of swallows that swoop in and pick up feathers from behind the pens. The swallows take the feathers to the birdhouses and tree cavities to build nests and we have an abundance of swallows.

From despair to determined

When we took the HM course, we were desperate. We realized that we could no longer survive by farming conventionally. Our farm is now a niche market farm. All of our land is certified organic and everything that we sell is certified organic with the exception of our hogs.

We direct market almost everything as it gives us the opportunity to show people how we raise and grow our food. We want to connect the consumer back to the land through the food that they purchase from us. This organic niche has allowed us to make money and give something back to the land.

For the first few years, I thought we would be able to carry on farming this way forever. However, the large food corporations have gotten into organics much faster than I thought. Although we have loyal customers, I am not sure they will continue to support us with the increasing price spread. We have been working hard on Plan B for about six years and this is where we will make our last stand.

Plan B is stewardship. In observing people who have visited our farm over the last six years, I have noticed that some have a yearning that is aching to be filled. When they come in contact with nature being cared for, it seems to give them some peace and contentment. Next on their list, they want great tasting food. They want to have a story behind their food. And they want to be romanced.

We think that our farm can offer all of the above. The urban family out on a Sunday drive to see how their food is raised and grown isn't going to find it in this age of industrialized, corporatized, supersized and vertically integrated agribusiness. They can come to our farm and see chickens, turkeys, laying hens and hogs all being raised in a free range model. They can see calves being born in June. And they can witness stewardship that is happening.

Appreciative diners

When they sit down at their dining room table back in the city to dine on one of our chickens, they can be content that they are supporting a third generation farm, practising sustainability and stewardship. In this age of increasing concern about the environment, I believe that this "stewardship friendly farming model" can make a difference. But hey, I'm biased. I am also concerned. Apparently we have about 30 per cent of our wetlands left and perhaps eight to 10 per cent of our native prairie left in this province. From what I see on our farm, these areas, along with riparian areas, are bastions of biodiversity.

If my doctor told me that I only had 30 per cent of my kidney function left and 10 per cent of my lung capacity left, I would be gravely concerned. Why aren't more farmers caring for these vital areas? The explanation is quite simple – they are not making a living. The hard lesson that I learned is that when I wasn't making money, trees were cleared, wetlands were drained and riparian areas were overgrazed. When I started to make a living, I was able to care for the land and then to develop that ecological conscience. I have one large "unfair advantage" over most farmers and ranchers. I know how long it took me to destroy a riparian area – 12 years.

I know how long it took to bring it back to a score of 84 per cent, which is healthy. It took 12 years. It took me six years of overgrazing to destroy habitat for meadowlarks on our farm. It took six years of careful grazing management to bring them back. Meadowlarks and Spraggs Pipits are barometers that let me know how well I am managing my pastures.

The destruction

The second year that we were on the farm I cleared 20 acres of native prairie and bush that was a nesting ground for sharp tail grouse. They have been gone for 24 years now and they still aren't back. Sometimes we go too far in destroying habitat, and this may be one of those cases, although I haven't given up yet.

Two years ago I plowed down three plots of pasture and planted them to a mix of wheat, barley, oats, peas, corn and sunflower seeds. Each plot is about half an acre. One plot is by a large treed area, another is by a wetland and the third is on the edge of a pasture out in the open. I hope that this experiment will provide food for the fall and winter months to birds who may consider taking up residence or who need a convenience store along their migration path.

In the last six years we have planted 25,235 trees – an average of 4,206 trees per year. This year, we planted another 4,200 trees, some of them in another one-acre wildlife plot. I have also started planting

Reflections

Welcome to my perch

Bert Witvoet

Face to face with your own egoism

According to Jean Vanier, the well-known founder of the L'Arche communities that provide homes for the most severe mentally and physically disabled, the more we work and live with the disadvantaged the more we become aware of our own egoism, anguish and fears. On the surface of it, that seems like a contradictory statement. You would think that working and living with the poor would increase our love and empathy. It does and it doesn't. Why? Because, as Vanier writes in his memoirs, "the poor call us continually to go farther in our love and in the bonds that unite us." This going farther ends up testing our resolve. Are we capable of making the required sacrifices? Or should we stay at a safe distance and resort to feel-good charity?

I have extensively written about our visit to South African black schools in previous issues of the *Christian Courier*. It was a satisfying experience for all of us who participated. But such visits are seldom quick, one-time affairs. They come with tentacles of expectancy. One of the most striking aspects of our visits was that we became aware of the reality of inequality of resources between Christian schools in Canada and Christian schools in South Africa, at least the black Christian schools we visited in the Limpopo province.

And you know what the Apostle Paul writes about inequality in 2 Corinthians 8:14 – "At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality." Apparently Paul does not like inequality. If Paul's desire for equality sounds a bit like Communism then that's because it almost is, except that we Christians might call it community-ism.

Compared to Christian schools in the Limpopo province of South Africa, our Christian schools in Canada are rich. The black Limpopo schools, on the other hand, are far behind in development of Christian curriculum, teacher training, resources and educational infra-structures, to the extent that one can easily speak of their schools as being disadvantaged and in need of help. But the challenge of meeting their needs can quickly make us aware of our own egoism, anguish and fears. Are we willing to rise to the challenge? Do we know what we are in for? It's going to cost us – big time.

Unexpected riches

This reality became more tangible to us when we received a visit from three South African principals during the month of October. The three principals were overwhelmed with they saw. But what especially struck them was that the reformed worldview that we had talked about in South Africa was in operation in our Christian schools in ways they had not imagined. Listen to the comments made by one of the principals, Wilson Mandende, principal of Theocentric Christian College, a K-12 school of 580 learners.

I thought I knew about the biblical reformed worldview before I came, but now I saw it in action. That made me realize how it pervades every aspect of Ontario Christian schools: the commitment of the organizations, administrators, and teachers, the teaching in the classrooms, chapels and assemblies, the behaviour of the students, the faithfulness of the supporting communities. That worldview is the foundation of everything that happens in Christian education in Ontario. It is only the biblical reformed worldview that will provide that same level of commitment and faithfulness in the Christian schools in South Africa. Our teachers must learn about it, become passionate about it, and teach from that perspective. Our parents and churches must become knowledgeable about it. There can be no compromise. It will change the country!

I was also impressed by the organizational structures of the OACS (Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, OCSAA(Ontario Christian School Administrators' Association), and OCSTA(Ontario Christian Teachers' Association) and how they operate independently, yet serve each others' needs. We have a lot of work to do in South Africa and, for now, need the expertise available in Canada.

A call for help

It's that last comment that made us Canadian educators who had been to their schools in South Africa examine our egoism, anguish and fears. The principals made it clear to us that they needed help to establish the reformed worldview. They pleaded with us, "Come over and help us." We had already promised them that we would organize another teachers' convention in the Spring of 2009, to build on the work done at the Teachers' Convention of 2007. "But," they said, "the gap is too big. What about 2008? If nothing happens in 2008, we will lose momentum." Two couples and one teacher responded by promising to return in 2008.

Making these decisions is not always a well-reasoned thing to do. Jean Vanier wrote in his memoirs that what he did with the disabled was not for "a specific or rational reason – it just seemed obvious…. Practically everything I did with L'Arche was intuitive, based on the sense that this is what should be done." And so it seemed obvious that there was a gap and that it needed to be filled. What these decisions show especially is that to create community with the disadvantaged, to listen to their cry, means you have to face your own fears. Are we able to sustain our level of support? How does this affect our life in Canada?

But what happens as a result is what Vanier describes as a transformation: "These bonds of friendship form and transform our hearts, encouraging us to give ourselves more fully and to live the Beatitudes of Jesus." We, who call ourselves the Limpopo Team, can testify to that. Our lives have been enriched by the bonds of friendship and a sense of community that our own visit to South Africa and the return visit of the three principals have established. We understand the cost, but we also experience the pay-back. One thing that has helped us here again is the realization that we have so much here that we take for granted. Do we realize enough what a gift Christian education taught from a biblical reformed perspective is for our communities? Isn't it an amazing thing that we have even established a way of spreading that vision throughout the world through an organization like Worldwide Christian Schools?

Listen to what Principal Elias Makhuvha wrote: *"It was very special for me to meet with the Board of Worldwide Christian Schools. This is the organization that has sponsored our 'parents' [that's us from the Limpopo Team] and I enjoyed the opportunity to let WWCS know that the work that has been sponsored so far was very good and necessary. It was good for me to see the excitement in that room about what was happening in South Africa."*

Humble beginnings

Principal Shirley Tsakani Masia noticed something else. She wrote: *"It was also a great experience to attend the teachers' Conference. It wasn't just the workshops. It was being with so many educators [about 800 teachers attended] who share the same worldview and goals for education. I found it amazing that the movement was this big, and was encouraged by that. This also started out as small beginning."*

I have come to realize that we need the perspective of these South African Christians to renew our enthusiasm for biblical reformed education at all levels – primary, secondary and tertiary. We in Canada have been at this business of Christian schooling for almost 60 years, and we may forget what it cost the early pioneers to establish these institutions. Those were humble beginnings, here in Canada, much like what the Limpopo schools are going through today. It was interesting to see that when our visitors presented a program to a group of elderly people in Shalom Gardens in Grimsby, they sang and danced for them with an enthusiasm not seen before. Why? Because, they said, "These are the pioneers of Christian education, and we want to honour them." Honouring elders is, of course, deeply ingrained in African culture. Our visitors brought that gift to Shalom Gardens. Through their eyes we could appreciate the wonderful gift of Christian education for which our parents sacrificed.

Through them we also experienced the incredible bonds of unity and love that a common endeavour inspires. Our Christian friends in South Africa have plenty of joy and love to give us, which in turn fills our need here. And who knows, some day, when the vision dims in the West (God forbid), they can return to us and show us what a biblical reformed worldview can do in the field of education.

Bert Witvoet is the former editor of CC, now retired, who stays active by editing the Christian Educators Journal and preaching the occasional sermon. He tries to stay informed by hearing and reading the daily news and Reformed by looking for writers and speakers who can tell the forest from the trees.

Farm stewardship *...continued from p.15*

2,000 white spruce seedlings in the poplar bush areas around the farm where most of the poplars have died. Our trees are fenced off from livestock. The grass on each side and in between the rows is left for wildlife. This adds up to 51 acres for wildlife.

It gives us pleasure to see nature at its best. Mule deer and white tail deer follow these two row shelterbelts throughout the winter, breaking the snow crust and foraging on the grass.

Wendell Berry, Aldo Leopold and the Amish people all speak about community. They tell us that community is not just people around us, but also nature, environment or the land. Many movies are about a relationship between two people that goes bad. In some cases, after a long period of time, one of these people realizes that it was his or her fault that the relationship failed. They work very hard for a long time to make amends and heal the relationship. This is exactly what happened between myself and the land. After a number of years I realized that I had made some serious mistakes and the stewardship that is now taking place on our farm is a result of that realization. I finally got it – I am a part of that community and I have responsibilities to that community.

The farmer's portrait

Otto Leopold states: "A farm is a portrait of the farmer." I would like to revise this just a touch. "A farm is a portrait of the farmer and those who have so graciously had the patience to influence and mentor him." I continue to hope that more people will realize that we all have the ability to influence others to make a difference. The land needs more stewards.

Classifieds

Birthday

Happy 80th Birthday!

Our mom, grandma and great-grandma

Elizabeth (Bep) VanWaveren

will celebrate her eightieth birthday on November 22.

We praise God for her loving presence in our lives and together with our families look forward to celebrating with her.

John & Grace
Pat & George
Wilma & Tom
Jane & Bernie
Helen & Murray
Grandchildren & great-grandchildren

Address: RR 7, Barnwell AB T0K 0B0

Personals

Single, Christian woman in her 30's would like to correspond/meet a Christian man also in his 30's.

Reply to: File 2761
c/o Christian Courier
5 Joanna Dr
St Catharines ON L2N 1V1

Classifieds

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Display advertising re. businesses and organizations: $8.00 per square inch. email:
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Anniversaries

"With thanks to God and joy in our hearts we celebrate our **50th Wedding Anniversary**"

John and Sylvia Jansen (nee **Visser**)

Please join us for an **Open House**,
Dec 8, 2007 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at
Bethel Christian Reformed Church
333 Davis Drive, Newmarket

Joining in this celebration are our children and grandchildren
Ingrid & Pat Sayers – Jessica
MaryAnn & Rudy Dietrich – Jim, Alex & Sonya
Henny Jansen

1952 December 7 2007

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain. Ps. 127:1a

Wieger (Bill) and Johanna (Joop) Stelpstra
(née **Renkema**)

Mom and Dad, you began to know each other already 60 years ago! Your lives together have been full of adventure, of joys and sorrows but the Lord has led all the way.
In March 2003 we were reminded of how thankful we ought to be for every day that you have had together. At that time it seemed we might lose Dad but Jesus, the Good Shepherd, restored him to Mom and to our family. We thank the Lord for giving you the many more "days" we asked for when you were married for 50 years. May the Lord of love and of life again shower you with blessings for the future!

With love, Lynne & Ed and the kids
****

All our love, from your children and grandchildren:

David & Nancy Stelpstra, *Simcoe, Ont.*
Joel & Julie, *Hull, Qué.*; Cameron, *London, Ont.*

Ted & Sara Stelpstra, *Sarnia, Ont.*
Brittney & David Salverda, *Grand Rapids, MI*;
Jordan; Dylan *(Calvin College)*

Robert Stelpstra, *Québec, Qué.*

Nelinda & Ed Vandenberg, *Houston, B.C.*
Lauren, Taylor, Maggie, Jonas
****

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ADMITTED into the MINISTRY

At its Oct. 26, 2007 meeting, held in John Calvin CRC, in Truro, N.S., Classis Eastern Canada examined Candidate

Bradley Willis Close

and, with the concurrence of the Synodical Deputies: Rev.'s J. Kerkhof, J. Kerssies, and E. Visser, admitted him into the ministry of the Word in the CRC.
May the King of the Church bless Rev. Close in his ministry as chaplain at Dalhousie University in Halifax, N.S.

James Kooistra S.C.

A Call for Brief Stories and Anecdotes About Your Emigration/Immigration Experience

We would like to collect, and publish, a collection of brief stories and anecdotes about unusual, humorous, not so humorous, and even disastrous events and situations arising from your, or your parents' emigration/immigration experience. Some of those events and situations arose from not knowing the language(s) or customs of Canada, for example, or from a lack of knowledge about Canada at the time of emigration. This is a part of the emigration/immigration experience that deserves to be preserved.

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Obituary

Koekange (Dr) Feb. 23, 1922 — Abbotsford BC Oct. 24, 2007

The Lord took home suddenly our brother and brother-in-law

Tim Steenbergen

Predeceased by his beloved wife Ann (Rudolphi)

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Arend Steenbergen	*Penticton BC*
Lammie & Henry Rumph	*Grimsby Ont.*
Gerry Fluit	*St Catharines Ont.*
Tiny Van den Berg	*Drayton Ont.*
Hilbert de Roo	*Strathroy Ont.*
Fygje & Tieme Van Dyk	*Ruinerwold Dr*
Roelof & Janny Steenbergen	*Koekange Dr*
Lutina & Hendrikus vander Veen	*Aalsmeer NH*

Predeceased by four sisters and four brothers-in-law.

May the Lord comfort his children, grandchildren and great-grandchild.

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Below are the issue dates and deadlines for the next few issues.

Issues	Deadlines
Dec 17	*Dec 5*
Jan 7	*Dec 27*
Jan 21	*Jan 9*

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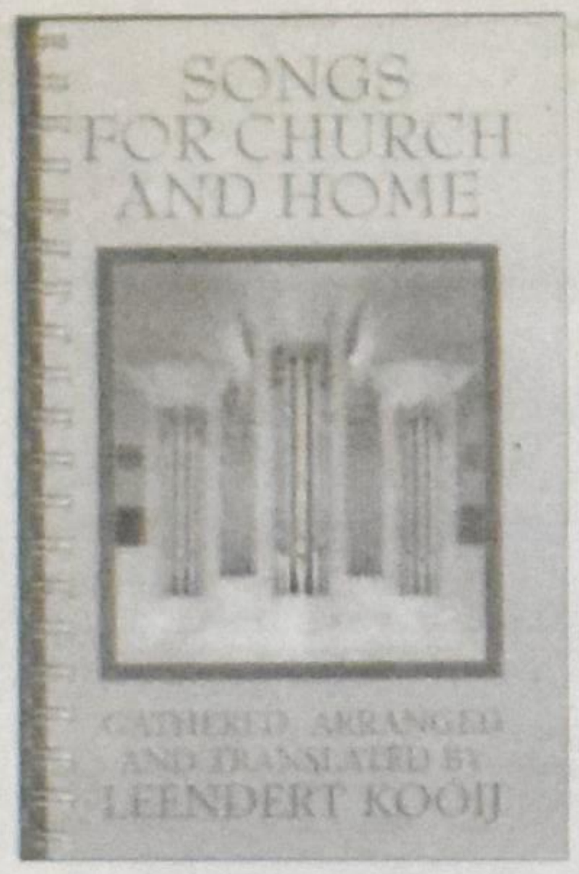

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Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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Nov 21-Nov 24 Theatre: "Home in Alfalfa" at Redeemer University College, **Ancaster.** Redeemer University College presents the comedy adapted by Raymond Louter, based on the book by Hugh Cook, and directed by Tom Carson. Tickets for the matinee on Wednesday are $7. Tickets for the evening performances are $13, students and seniors $11. Please contact Box Office at 905-648-2139 x 4211.

Nov 23 Annual Dutch Christmas Hymn Sing at Holland Christian Homes, **Brampton**. See ad this issue for details.

Dec 7 Christmas Concert at Redeemer University College, **Ancaster**. Details in ad below.

Dec 21 Liberation choir 4th annual Christmas sing-a-long concert. 8 pm Redeemer University. See ad below.

Dec 22 Liberation choir 4th annual Christmas sing-a-long concert. 8 pm Rehoboth CRC, Bowmanville. See ad below.

Jan 27/08 Maranatha CRC, **Cambridge** 50th anniversary. A special service to be held at 10 a.m. More events will be held in April.

Feb 15-17 Marriage encounter weekend in **Niagara Falls**, ON. For more information or to register on-line, go to **www.reformedme.org** or contact Chris & Cindy Otten at 519-393-5163 or by email at Ontario_Registration@reformedme.org.

April 19, 20 Maranatha CRC, **Cambridge** 50th anniversary. Celebrations and special events will be held on Saturday April 19 at 7 p.m. and Sunday April 20 during the 10 a.m. service.

May 2-4 Marriage encounter weekend in **London**, ON. For more information or to register on-line, go to **www.reformedme.org** or contact Chris & Cindy Otten at 519-393-5163 or by email at Ontario_Registration@reformedme.org.

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News

Progress on 'collapsing' beehives

Some warned of crop disaster when honeybees started to disappear. Crops didn't fail, but farmers and beekeepers aren't out of danger yet.

Moises Velasquez-Manoff

Last fall, honeybee hives began showing up mysteriously vacant. Entire adult bee populations seemingly vanished without a trace, often leaving the queen, juveniles, and honey behind.

By spring, what beekeepers had called "autumn collapse" or "fall dwindle disease" had a new name: Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). CCD hit nearly one-quarter of commercial beekeeping operations in the United States. Affected operations lost between 50 and 90 percent of their hives. In an industry where 10 to 20 percent yearly losses are common, the die-offs were drastic. In March testimony before the House's Committee on Agriculture, Diana Cox-Foster, a professor of entomology at Pennsylvania State University in University Park, called CCD a "serious threat to American agriculture."

Ultimately, pollination went smoothly this year. Imported bees replenished domestic stocks, and good weather aided weak hives. Research on CCD has progressed, though its exact causes remain hidden. But the crisis did highlight what some say is agriculture's overreliance on honeybees.

Honeybees pollinate one-third of all US crops – apples, almonds, and blueberries among them – valued at some $14.6 billion. For years, ecologists had warned that total reliance on honeybees – and on any monoculture, be it cotton, potato, or bee – makes a crop vulnerable to failure. Potential alternate pollinators – some 4,000 kinds of native bees – were having their own problems, from habitat loss and pesticides to imported diseases.

Alarmed lawmakers introduced the Pollinator Protection Act into Congress, which was later rolled into the 2007 Farm Bill. In July, the House authorized $86.5 million over five years for research on CCD and honeybee health. In October, the Senate raised the amount to $100 million. Meanwhile, scientists from several institutions and disciplines brought their exper-tise to bear on CCD. And in September, they named a prime suspect: the so-called Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus (IAPV).

As for this year's crop, "I don't want to say it was business as usual, but it was pretty close," says Kim Flottum, editor of Bee Culture magazine in Medina, Ohio. "There were enough bees to pollinate everything that needed pollinating."

Warm, clear weather, espe-cially in California, helped weak hives do more pollinating, he says. (Dry conditions also contributed to a record low honey harvest – 150 million pounds compared with the usual 200 million to 250 million, he says.) Beekeepers augmented hives with bees imported from Australia. Hive rental fees did rise, he says, but that was due more to speculating than to a honeybee shortage.

"Beehives are worth their weight in gold somewhere," says Mr. Flottum.

We're not in the clear, Flottum and others warn. The money that beekeepers spent replenishing hives likely put them deep into the red, and the hives are still weak. Neither bees nor beekeepers can absorb these losses on an ongoing basis.

"I'm anxious about what happens this year," says Dennis vanEngelsdorp, the acting state apiarist with the Pennsylvania Department of Agri-culture. "Migratory beekeepers are the last of their kind, the last nomadic farmers in America."

James Doan, a beekeeper out of Hamlin, N.Y., lost more than half his hives last winter. After getting his numbers back up to 2,000, he lost another quarter over the summer.

"If I can get enough money to get out of this business, I'll get out," he says. "I don't see a lot of future."

Honeybee health problems come at a time when, driven by a growing taste for specialty crops, demand for pollination services is growing. This year, the almond harvest increased by 19 percent over last year, topping 1,330 million pounds for a record crop, according to the Almond Board of California. Of the estimated 2.5 million hives in America, more than half will converge on California's almond orchards come spring.

We're "not really at a crisis situation," says Jeff Pettis, research leader at the USDA-ARS's Bee Research Laboratory in Beltsville, Md. "We just don't have much in the way of a buffer."

A paper recently published in the journal *Virology* hints at a possible fix. One of the scientists who originally identified IAPV, Ilan Sela of Hebrew University in Jerusalem details a honeybee strain that's resistant to the virus. The bee has retained bits of IAPV genetic material in its own genome – a naturally occurring phenomenon – and gained some immunity, he says.

"The whole problem could be addressed by using these transgenic bees," says Dr. Lipkin.

Meanwhile, honeybees' predicament has brought long-sought attention to the usefulness – and plight – of natural pollinators. A 2006 National Academy of Sciences report on the status of pollinators in North America cites "direct evidence for decline in some pollinator species." And yet, in a forthcoming study in Ecology Letters, Rachael Winfree, a postdoctoral research associate at the University of California, Berkeley, finds that, when present, wild pollinators can do much of the pollinating.

In the New Jersey watermelon farms she studied, they did 90 percent. As compared with the vast monocultural fields of California's Central Valley or the Great Plains, the eastern agricultural landscape is dominated by many small farms interspersed with patches of natural habitat.

"Native bees are doing close to complete pollination," she says. "It would be good to have that kind of backup plan" in other places.

And that means different land-use practices. Indeed, recognizing wild pollinators' importance, some states already offer incentives to restore pollinator habitat.

For three years, the National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) in Montana has offered cost-sharing incentives for farmers and ranchers to grow pollinator-friendly plants. More recently, NRCS in New Jersey began offering $750 per acre to landowners who restore "wildflower meadows for pollinators."

Conservationists hope for $3 billion to $5 billion more from the new Farm Bill to boost such cost-sharing measures, says Tom Van Arsdall, the public affairs representative for the Pollinator Partnership in Washington, D.C. Although the authorized funds may not make it through appropriations, Van Arsdall already counts one victory. The Farm Bill now contains the word "pollinator," he says. It didn't, before.

"You could call it a watershed moment," he says.

Scientists have long warned that reliance on one species for pollination services – the honeybee – leaves pollination-dependent crops at greater risk of failure. "We've been saying that for a while. It's crazy to rely on a single species," says Claire Kremen, a conservation biologist at the University of California, Berkeley, and a recently named MacArthur Fellow.

A decline in wild pollinators has only exacerbated the problem. Farmers can't count on native pollinators for backup. But certain land-management practices can "bring back some floral diversity" and entice natural pollinators back to the farmscape, says Dr. Kremen. Here are a few:

- Learn to tolerate weeds around field edges. They provide food and habitat for pollinators.
- Plant "insectary strips" – strips of flowers for insects. They should include plants that bloom in succession – spring, summer, and fall – so pollinators have forage at any given time of the year. In very large fields, grow not just strips, but islands of habitat.
- Grow hedgerows at field boundaries. They provide good habitat. They also block wind and halt erosion.
- Leave some land unplowed. Tilling kills native bee species that nest in the earth.

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